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Division.....

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The Spirituall use of an
Orchard, or Garden of
FRUIT-TREES.

Set forth in divers *Similitudes* betweene
Naturall and *Spirituall* fruit-trees, in their
Natures, and ordering, according to
Scripture and Experience.

The second Impression; with the Addition of many *Similitudes*.
By R A: AUSTEN, Author of the first part.

Hof: 12. 10. *I have used Similitudes by the Ministrie of the Prophets.*

Jer: 17. 8. *He shall be as a Tree planted by the waters: and that spreadeth out her Roots by the River, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leafe shall be greene, and shall not be carefull in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yeilding fruit.*

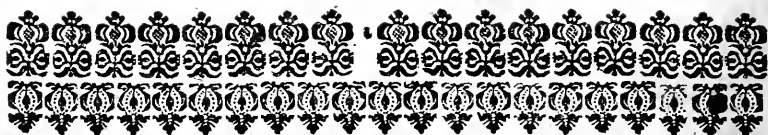
Rom: 11. 23. *And they also, if they abide not still in unbeleife, shall be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in againe.*

Joh: 15. 1, 2. *I am the true Vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*

Cant. 2. 3. *Like the Apple-tree among the Trees of the forrest, so is my beloved among the sonnes. I sate downe under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my tast.*

O X F O R D,

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A Preface to the Reader.



HAVING in the first part of this work spoken at large, concerning the ordering of *Naturall Fruit-trees*, in all respects, and of the great *Profits, Pleasures, and Advantages* that arise thence; I shall now consider *Fruit-trees* upon another Accompt; and endeavour to make some *Spirituell use*; and improvement of them.

And this should be our care, as to all creatures which we have to do with, upon all occasions: according to the example of our Lord, and Saviour, whose use it was to *spirituallize Naturall and Morall things*, when he conversed with us in his bodily presence, as we see frequently in Scripture. When the *Pharisees* spake of *washing their hands before meate*. Matth. 15. 20. Christ instructs them (thereupon) about *spirituall defilements*; when the woman of *Samaria* came to draw water, Christ tells her of *living water*, Joh. 4. 10. When his disciples brought him *Meate*, he tells them he had *meate they knew not of*, it was *meate*, and *drinke to him to do his fathers will*, Jo. 4. 34. When the man spake of having his inheritance divided Luk. 12. 13. our Saviour (thereupon) instructs him, and others at large, to beware of *covetousnesse*, and *worldly cares*: when the multitude followed him having eaten of the *Loaves*, Jo. 6. Christ thereupon counsellts them to labour for the *meat that perisheth not, for the bread of life*, Joh. 6. 26.

And many *spirituall things* he illustrates by *Similitudes* from *Naturall things*: as we see Matth. 13. (and many other places) from *Seede, Tares, Mustard-seed, Leaven, a Treasure in the Field, a Pearle,*

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a draw net &c. So should we make a *Spiritual use of Naturall things*; and so turne Earth (as it were) into heaven.

When we have gone through all the workes and labours to be performed in the *Orchard*, and have received thereby a rich recompence of *Temporall Profits and Pleasures* in the use of the *Trees and Fruits*, we may (besides all that) make a *Spiritual use* of them, and receive more and greater *Profits and Pleasures* thereby. Men are not wont to stint themselves at *wordly Profits*, but why are they not willing to receive *all kinds of Profits*, or why are they not willing to receive the *greatest, and best*? should a man chuse, and preferre a *Glassi-beade* or *Toy* before some *Pretious, and Rich Jewell*, would he not be censured for a foolish man: how much more foolish, and unwise is he that seeks after *Temporall Profits*, and neglects *Spiritual*, and *Eternall*? therefore be carefull to make a *Spiritual improvement of fruit-trees*.

The *World* is a great *Library*, and *Fruit-trees* are some of the *Books* wherein we may read and see plainly the *Attributes of God*, his *Power, Wisdome, Goodnesse &c.* and be instructed and taught our duty towards him in many things, even from *Fruit-trees*: for as trees (in a *Metaphoricall sence*) are *Books*, so likewise in the same sence they have a *Voyce*, and speak plainly to us, and teach us many good lessons.

The Lord *Bacon* saies, *God hath two great Books which we ought to study*, his *Word*, and his *Works*: the one discovers his *Will*, the other his *Power*.

The *Apostle* saies *Rom. 1. 20.* *The invisible things of him from the Creation of the World are clearely scene, being understood by the things that are made, even his Eternall Power and Godhead.*

The *Creatures of God* are to be studied as *Books*, for in them we may read the *Attributes of God* and observe some small resemblances, and darke shadowes of his infinite *Excellencies*, and *Perfections*; they are scene *Per speculum Creaturarum*. They who cannot read a line in any Printed Book, may read many good lessons in the Book of the *Creatures*.

Fruit-trees though they are dumb companions, yet (in a sence) we may discourse with them: The works of God speak to the mind as his Word does to the Ear. Mr *Boulton* saies *Our Eyes* (*Especially on the Sabbath day*) ought as little *Bees* fall upon severall objects,

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and from them (as from so many *Flowers*) gather hony, and bring it into the hive; That is, sweet, heavenly, wholesome *Meditations* for magnifying the Creator in all his *Attributes*.

Fruit-trees and other *Creatures* do truly (though without an articulate voyce) Preach the *Attributes* and *perfections* of God to us; And we may read divine Truthes in them, as in a Book consisting of words and sentences; the *Creatures* of God (according to their natures) speak out the praises of God, *Pf. 145. 10. All thy workes praise thee O Lord, and among them Fruitfull Trees, 148. 9.*

Things without sense or life, have a voyce, and speak to us, *Pf. 19. The Heavens declare the glory of God. vers. 3. Their voyces are heard in every language, or Nation. and vers. 4. Their words go to the ends of the World.*

So that not only *rationall* and *irrationall*, but even *Inanimate Creatures* have a voyce, and speak loudly to men, and it is our duty to learne their language, and hearken to them.

All Creatures (as a holy Man saies) have a teaching voyce, they read us *divinity Lectures* of *divine Providence*.

We must be content to stoope to their way and manner of teaching, as the *Egyptians* and others in former times, who were instructed by *Characters* and *Hyeroglyphiques*, by something represented to the eye, *Notions* were conveyed to the understanding.

Dumbe Creatures speak *virtually* and *convincingly* to the mind, and *Conscience*.

If we make use of *Creatures* to serve our turne only in reference to our outward man, we make not halfe that use of them as we ought, we should study the *Creatures* and learne from them, to bring us neater the Creator, Climbing up by them, as by *steps*, or *staires*, till we ascend to the highest Good.

How much of the goodnesse and excellencies of God do *Fruit-trees* shew forth when they (in their seasons) flourish with *Leaves* *Blossomes* and *Fruits*; especially considered not only as they appeare beautifull to the eye, but also with all their *inward beauties* and *perfections*, *their virtues*, and *uses in the life of man*? Both in *Alimentall* and *Physicall* respects; but most of all, as they are *Similitudes* and beare the figure, and resemblance of many high and great *Mysteries* in the Word of God: the Analogie and resemblance is very neere.

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fore his coming in the flesh, by his *Prophets*, as we see *Hos: 12. 10.* *I have used Similitudes by the Ministry of the Prophets: so we find in Esay, Ezekiel, and the rest.*

One saies, as *Windowes are to a house, so are SIMILITUDES to a Discourse*: they both let in light to see and discern things that otherwise would be obscure.

Fruit-trees are a *TEXT* from which may be raised many profitable *Doctrines*, and *Conclusions*, which may be proved by *Scripture*, and *Experience*.

Now therefore, seeing many things may be learned from *Fruit-trees* for Spirituall profit; I shall set downe some *Observations* which I have made upon them, discovering the *Nature*, and ordering of *Naturall*, and *Spirituall Fruit-trees*, in divers *SIMILITUDES*, according to *Scripture*, and *experience*, speaking of most particulars very breifly.

As I have planted many thousands of *Naturall Fruit-trees* for the good of the *COMMON-WEALTH*, so also I have taken some *Spirituall Cyences*, or *Grafts* from them (I meane severall *Propositions* drawne from *Observations in Nature*, which are some what branched forth into *Boughes*, and *twiggs*) and bound them up and sent them abroad for the good of the *Church of God*: And if men will but accept of them, and be content to have them engrafted in their own *Gardens*, (their hearts and minds) by the *Husbandmans watering* of them by his Spirit, they will grow, and blossome, and beare much good fruit, here and for ever.

Fruits of Faith, Love, Ioy, Peace, and other *Fruits of the Spirit*, *Bunches of Grapes*, For the feeding, and refreshing of our *Soules* as we travell through the *Wildernesse*, and the increase of our *Glory* hereafter in *Canaan* to all Eternity.

Which Improvement the Great Husbandman grant unto Thee, together with

Thy Servant in the Lord,

R. A. AUSTEN.

To my deare Friend and Brother in the
 Lord Mr. R. Austine the Author of
 the Treatise of Fruit-trees.

S I R,



H E benefit my selfe and others have received from your godly society and Gospell conversation heretofore may be argument enough for us thankfully to embrace your pregnant similitudes and Gospell observations. I must confesse I am bound to blesse the Lord, for the acquaintance and familiarity I formerly had and still have with you: I seldome came to your garden but you made your trees *speake* something of Christ and the gospell; your custome was to present your Christian friends and visitors with such clusters of gospell grapes which you now send abroad to the world.

Its admirable to see what spirituall improvements you have made of your *Nursery*: the Reader (if he have senses exercised to relish and distinguish) will soone taste the sweetnesse of your spirituall fruit, especially considering.

1. That you take your rise from such things as are obvious and familiar to every mans Capacity, which may easily set the minds of the Readers on work upon Jesus Christ; *duo illa nos maxime movent: similitudo, & exemplum: Cic: 3. de Orat.*

2. Its wonderfull to see so much Gospell gathered from *natures* all *Twigs*: The naturall voyce of the creatures tell us that God is, *Qui fecit me propter te, fecit te propter se.* As *Aristotle* and *Galen* report: but none ever made the creatures (in so plaine, and familiar a manner) speak of Christ before. Bernard.

I must acquaint the Reader, that here is in your Similitudes gospel profit with soule delight and pleasure. The spirituall Reader is here taught how to meete with Christ amongst the *Mirtle Trees*. * *Dicta enim Hieroglyphica apud Aegyptios sacra quaedam monumenta sculptis animalium figuris significantia. Macrobi. Satur. lib. 1. 21.*

Sir, we must all give you thanks for your pious explication of *natures*. * *Hieroglyphicks*; whereby you have made the creatures speak plaine, Its gospell wisdom that must make your young plants to beare such apples of gold. *Do men gather grapes of thornes or figs of thistles? saith Christ.* No: naturally they will not yeeld such

† †

kinds

kinds of fruit, but here are spirituall grapes from natures wild trees, thats admirable.

Joh. 15. 2. 6. 3. The Reader may observe that you make the dead to speak as well as the living: I meane your withered and unprofitable plants
Mat. 15. 13. which you cast out of your Nursery yeelds most profitable observations. The Lord will have a time to root out every tree, and
Luk. 13. 7. cut off every branch which beares no fruit: not a body onely but sap, not leaves but fruit which the Lord likes in professors.

4. *Your varieties* of spirituall fruit may exceedingly please the godly Reader; mens minds naturally are much delighted with variety: all the similitudes in the world will not reach to that fulnesse and variety of fulnesse which is in the Lord Jesus Christ; we read
Revel: 22. 2. of a Tree that *bare twelve manner of fruits*: which
Mr Diodati. Tree is Christ, saith a Reverend man in his pious Annotations.

Rom. 11. 36. Its a mystery to the world that Beleivers should bring forth variety of fruits to *Christ*, and yet receive all manner of fruits from *Christ*; of him and by him and through him (and therefore to him) be all things: *Our life is hid in Christ as the root*; our graces are all from him, our sap, fruit and all: therefore its observable what your drift is. As Christ, the Prophets, and Apostles were wont to send men to Trees, Fruits, and Plants for divine considerations, now least men should fix too much here, you strive to fetch the minds of the Readers off from them all to Christ againe, and especially by the same way. The good Lord open our eyes that we may follow on in your path; that as we have all felt the misery following of our eating the forbidden fruit, we may eat now of this Tree of life. So prayes

Sir,

Decemb. 24.

1656.

Your very loving Friend

and Brother in the Lord

J. F. A Minister

of the Gospell.

To the READER.



HE blessed God hath a *speciall work* to do in the world, in which he imployes his faithfull servants, and such oftentimes as are (in comparison of others) but as *Babes in Christ* ; when such as the men of the world esteeme the only *wise men* , are rejected of the Lord. God for his owne glory is pleased to staine the pride of men, to pull down such as lift up themselves, and attribute that glory to themselves which is only due to God; and exalts such as are of *low degree*, Luk. 1. 52, 53. such as see, & are hartily affected with their owne emptinesse, and insufficiency, and are enabled to roile themselves on God, for wisdom, and strength to do his work faithfully. God hath for the most part made use of *Instruments* to bring about his *great designs* , and *interests* , both in *Church and State* : such as have been scorned, and contemned by *ungodly learned men* , who reject the pretious truths of God, because God sends and imployes such of his servants to dispeuce them unto men, that have not such *humane learning* , *Titles* , and *degrees* as themselves the only things in a carnall Eye, but poore, low things in a spirituall Eye, in comparison of the teachings of the spirit of God. I know, and do freely grant, that *Human Learning* is a most choice and excellent gift, when it is sanctified in any person, and that which God hath made use of in his servants sometimes to carry on, and promote his great workes, and interests in the world: And I do greatly honour such *gracious learned men* , as improve their *grace and learning for Gods* ; and such persons as have a low esteeme of *Learning* , and speak slightly of it, or of *Learned men* because *such* , I dare affirme such men speak evill of that which they understand not. I am no enemy to *Humane Learning* , as some in the University have affirmed, and possessed others in the Country with the same opinion of me, my practise can witnesse; for it is well knowne that I spent many yeares in the University and Country, to obtaine a little, that I might be the more serviceable to God in my generation; and I find that that which the Lord hath given me, is very usefull unto me in the work that I am called unto by God, and men. But I shall intreate, And do earnestly desire *some Learned men* , both in the

To the Reader.

University and Country, seriously to consider, whether or no they do not greatly, and apparently abuse their *Learning*.

First, In preferring it before the *Spirit of God*, and the *saving knowledge of Christ*.

Secondly, In having higher thoughts of themselves than of others, who it may be, are more *Holy*, and *Humble*, and have more of the *teachings of the Spirit of God* than themselves.

Thirdly, In despising, and contemning their *Persons, Sermons, Books, Prayers, and Discourses*, because they have not so much *Humane Learning* as themselves.

Fourthly, In discouraging, and hindering such servants of the Lord as desire to improve their *Graces*, and *gifts* for God, endeavoring to commend the Lord Christ to others for their salvation.

Fifthly, By endeavoring to prejudice the minds of men against *such*, who yet God employes in the work of the Ministry.

Sixthly, In boasting of their *Parts*, and *Learning*, and resting thereon, forgetting God who gave it.

Seaventhly, In neglecting to use their *Learning* for that end for which God bestowed it on them.

Consider: hath God given you *larger opportunities*, and *greater helps*, and *advantages* than others, that you should be *more idle*, and *unfruitfull* than others? the Lord awaken you, and make you zealous and active for your Master in this time of need, (many places have been a long time destitute of godly able Preachers) that when he shall come he may say unto you, well done good and faithfull servants, enter into the joy of your Lord.

Concerning the *Author* of the following *Observations*, and *Similitudes*, what ever *Carnall men*, or the *pride* of *Spiritual men* may object (as who that is zealous, and active for God, can escape the censures of some men) it evidently appears to me, that the *Spirit of God* hath carried him on in this work. Reject not the work because it is not done by a *Publique Minister of the Gospell*, for many *private experienced Christians* have beene (in this way) very profitable to the Church of God; These are the *last times*, wherein God fulfills his great *Gospell promise*, in *pouring out his Spirit upon all flesh*; and those whom God intends for any *speciall service*, he prepares them for it by some *speciall preparations*. I have seene a *large particular Relation*, composed by this Author
of

To the Reader.

of God's dealings with him for many yeares together; wherein it appeares, that God began betime with him, *early*, even the *first* *houre of the day*: And he hath beene exercised with many Temptations from his youth up; having passed through the *spirit of bondage early in the morning*, and by degrees came to close with Christ, and to attaine a comfortable assurance of his interest in him: But afterwards, even *about the middle of the day* (upon the spirits withdrawing and God's hiding of his face for some grations ends) he fell into a *long, and sad desertion*, passing through the valley of the shadow of death, the paines of hell gat hold upon him, and that in an extraordinary way and measure; But God (by degrees) lifted him up out of the deepe Pit, out of the Mire, and Clay, and set his feet upon a Rock, and hath put a new song into his Mouth, and made him active for God in his Generation.

As for his following Labours, I doubt not but God will make them very usefull, and profitable to the people of God: what is more helpfull to the understanding, and remembring of Spirituall things, than plaine, and pregnant SIMILITUDES, of things which we are daily conversant with? (all these being also enlarged upon by him and improved to spirituall ends, and advantages.) What was all the old *Ceremoniall Law*, for many hundred yeares, but teaching the People by SIMILITUDES, *Tipes*, and *Ceremonies*, which were all *shadowes of things to come*? Heb. 10. 1. The spirit of God used SIMILITUDES by the Ministry of the Prophets Hof. 12. 10. yea; the great Prophet of the Church frequently used SIMILITUDES in his teachings; and Ministers of the Gospell in our daies find them very usefull, and profitable in their teachings.

Wherefore (Reader) I recommend the following Observations, and Similitudes to thy use; Praying that the spirit of God may engraft every truth into thy heart, and cause it to grow, and bring forth much good fruit, to the glory and praise of God, and thy owne everlasting good.

STEPHEN FORD, *Pastor of*
a Church of CHRIST in
CHIPPIN, NORTON.

Propositions Shadowed out unto us

by Observations in Nature, and Cleared

by Scripture and Experience.

- I. **G**od from all Eternity made choice of what Spirituall Plants he pleased, to Plant in his Garden the Church, and refused others pag. 1.
2. The dispensations of God towards weak Christians, are more gentle, than towards such as are strong p. 3.
3. Many Spirituall Fruit-trees bring forth faire, and Specious fruits to Observation, which yet are unpleasant to the Husbandman p. 5.
4. Persons joyned in any Relation, they have comfort, or affliction together according to their natures p. 6.
5. God calls his People (for the most part) in youth, and more rarely when they are old p. 8.
6. When the Spirit of God Withdrawes, then Mysticall Fruit-trees cease growing, their Leaves and Fruits fall, and they endure sore conflicts for a time, but at the returne of the Spirit, they are restored to former comforts with advantage p. 13.
7. Generally those persons who are excessive, and most curious about the formes of Duties, have least of the power of Godlinesse p. 18.
8. By the fruits of Spirituall Trees, we may conclude the Nature of the Trees. p. 20.
9. Some persons flourish with a profession for a time, but in the heat of affliction they fall off p. 22.
10. We should bend all our desires, and endeavours that the best gifts, graces, and Fruits, may especially encrease p. 23.
11. While the Spirituall part in us acts, and growes strongly, the fleshy part acts but weakly: so also, if the flesh be strong, the Spirit is weak p. 26.
12. The more closely a Christian walks with God, the more steadfast he is, and more free from Spirituall enemies p. 28.
13. Corrupt nature abides in believers as long as they live, and is but in part subdued by grace p. 29.
14. It is not any outward excellencies, but the Image of God upon the

by Observations in Nature.

the Soul, that is the glory of a person

p.30.

15. There is a firme, and constant union betweene Christ, and every Believer

p.32.

16. University men ought (in convenient time) to go forth into the service of the Church, and Common-wealth: except some choice persons fit for government of the Societies

p.33.

17. Saving grace, or the Divine nature in Believers, abides in the Soul for ever: But common gifts, or graces may be lost

p.37.

18. God is well pleased With Zealous, and active Instruments in his Works: But men of dull, indifferent spirits, he (often) layes them aside, and puts others in their stead

p.39.

19. The commotions, troubles, and confusions in the Church of God, will end in the settlement, peace, and glory of it

p.41.

20. Believers by ingrafting into Christ, do live in him, and he in them, and are thereby made one with him

p.43.

21. All believers have a likeness, and resemblance of one another, in the Image of God upon their soules

p.45.

22. Those whom God purposeth to bring hereafter into his celestiall Paradise, he prepareth them for it here, in this life

p.47.

23. Grace in the hearts of believers is not suddenly strong, but strength is gotten by degrees

p.49.

24. Discoveries of the love of God to soules prepared for Christ, does hasten their closing with him

p.51.

25. A sinners repentance, and closing with Christ, causeth joy both in Heaven, and Earth

p.54.

26. There is a sweet fellowship, and communion betweene God, and his people, God delights in them, and they delight in him

p.56.

27. Who, or whatsoever hinders the enlargement of the Church of God, he will certainly, (and sometimes with great anger,) take out of the way

p.60.

28. The constant enjoyment of the best things from God, (through corruptions) makes them lesse noted, and esteemed

p.63.

29. Our life, growth, strength, and all our spirituall Acts, are from Christ

p.65.

30. Humble Christians bring forth farre more, and fairer fruits, than such whose spirits are lifted up

p.67.

31. Jesus Christ, and his people (though multitudes of distinct persons) are so united, as that they make but one body

p.69.

by Observations in Nature

32. *As we have our life, and all from Christ, so we are continually receiving new supplies from him, but can adde nothing to his infinite perfections* p.71.

33. *The dispensations of God towards his Church are contrary to the judgments of most people in the World* p.73.

34. *Those Who have not the Sanctifying Spirit, and grace of God in them, are unfit for the work of the Ministry; such bring more prejudice than advantage to the Church of God* p.76.

35. *None but engrafted Trees grow in Gods Orchard the Church* 83.

36. *Those fruits of spirituall fruit-trees which are harsh, sharp, and bitter, are (for the most part) more profitable than such as are mild, and pleasant* p.84.

37. *Those persons are not like to bring forth good fruits in old age, who labour not for them in the time of youth* p.86.

38. *Those who do not act for God, they act against him* p.87.

39. *God expects greater returns of duty from some persons than from some others, and neglect thereof provokes God against them* p.88.

40. *It is not the multitude, nor exactnesse of performance of duties, that God accepts, unlesse there be sincerity, and right ends in doing thereof* p.90.

41. *The smallest measure of true grace in any person can never be extinguished, but will certainly grow up to perfection* p.92.

42. *God hath more dishonour by the sinnes of Professors, than by the sinnes of others* p.93.

43. *Conversion in youth is not so apparent as in elder yeares* p.95.

44. *The great persons in the World, who are in Christ, are but few in number, in respect of the meaner sort* p.96.

45. *Although beleivers are shaken by the Winds of temptations, yet they cannot be overturned, because they are fixed upon Christ* p.97.

46. *Sinfull thoughts, and motions in the soule are most easily suppressed at their first rising* p.98.

47. *The instructions of one Godly person, sometimes, are effectually (by the Spirit) to the implanting of many into Christ* p.99.

48. *Persons ingrafted into Christ, do naturally bring forth good fruits* p.100.

49. *There are but a few Godly persons in the world, in comparison of the number of the wicked* p.102.

50. *The works of formall Hypocrites are (in many things) very like*

By Observations in Nature.

like the Works of true Christians

pag. 103.

51. Some Persons are wrought upon in part (in some things) like to those that are ingrafted into Christ, who yet never attaine to be really united to him

104.

52. The meanest person in Christ, brings forth better fruits, than the most accomplishe unregenerate person in the World

105.

53. Christ is continually ready to communicate strength, and refreshings to his people, and all defects thereof are from themselves

106.

54. By diligent use of the meanes of Grace, Christians attaine great advantages, with through neglect (or slight using meanes) would be lost.

108.

55. Frequent Acts in things Good or Evil, beget Habits, and make all such Works easy to us

111.

56. Afflictions, and whatsoever befalls the People of God, the same works advantage to them

113.

57. God (for the most part) useth meanes, and ordinary men, and meanes, for effecting of the greatest works in the world

114.

58. The Prayers, Sermons, Writings, Discourse, and Works of some Godly men, are much more spirituall than of some others

118.

59. Regenerated persons have three great enemies, one inward, and two outward, the Flesh, the World, and the Devill

119.

60. The people of God in their conversion (for the most part) goe through many straits, and difficulties

121.

61. When the People of God bring forth good fruits, God himselfe doth praise, and commend them

122.

62. Persons by Regeneration, have a great change wrought in them

123.

63. The severall Gifts and Graces in believers, are wrought by the same spirit

125.

64. There are exceeding many, and great profits, and pleasures found in the Church of God

126.

65. The Church of God is encompassed, and preserved by God himselfe

129.

66. When God doth purge a Nation, or place, from persons, and things that are offensive to him, and brings in his people, and worship, instead thereof, this is an evident token that God intends to dwell there

130.

67. The free love, and care of God is as much towards his people

in

Proposition Shadowed

in the meanest outward condition, as towards those who are most eminent in the world p^{ig}. 136.

68. Believers who daily walke with God, having the light of his countenance, and constant communion with him, such are abundantly fruitfull. 138.

69. God doth not only engraft his people into Christ, but orders them in all other respects also, to make them abundantly fruitfull 140.

70. The graces of believers increase daily in strength whereby they are more, and more able to resist spirituall enemies 142.

71. Many persons of a low ranke, and but of despised parts, doe yet bring forth more profitable fruits than many others eminent in gifts and outward respects 144

72. God will not allow an idle person, but expects every one should be profitable in his place 146.

73. The life of man is very uncertaine, some die in Childhood, others in youth, others in old age, and in the roome of these others arise 148.

74. According to mens Principles, such are their attings; and their reward according to both 149.

75. Spirituall fruit-trees ingrafted into Christ, are many waies profitable in their generations 152.

76. The most spirituall attings of believers tast of corrupt nature, which notwithstanding are acceptable unto God 154.

77. There is a continuall combate betweene Grace and Nature, in every regenerate person, but grace prevailes 155.

78. Some believers are (by advantages) more fruitfull than others, and at some more than at other times 156

79. God beares with the failings, and imperfections of his people, and is ever ready to take notice of, and commend the good that is in them 158.

80. Trees of the Lords planting bring forth fruits seasonably 161.

81. The godly are profitable not only one to another, but the wicked also fare the better for them 163.

82. When men are slow in the duties of obedience, God is patient towards them, & in the use of all good meanes waits for their fruitfulness 164.

83. Unregenerate persons (of themselves) cannot come to Christ, nor bring forth one good fruit 166.

84. Some Christians cheifly pursue some particular duties, belonging ing

By Observations in Nature.

ing to them, and neglect others pag. 168.

85. While persons remain in an unregenerate state, all the meanes of grace is unprofitable to them 170.

86. Christians by walking holily, and fruitfully, they bring much honour to God, but if otherwise dishonour 171.

87. The same things which are blessings to the Godly, are curses to the Wicked; because of their different Principles 172.

88. The best of Gods Children are guiltie of many sins, and infirmities in their conversations 174.

89. Carnall persons are as forward, and zealous in the waies of sin, as (usually) the godly are in the waies of holinesse 176.

90. The Conditions of the people of God are much different, yet God careth for them all 178.

91. True and faithfull Ministers of the Gospell, do diligently looke into the state of their people, and deale with them accordingly 179

92. God discovereth a speciall care of, and love unto those of his people, whose Judgment and waies concur with his designe in their generation 183.

93. God is a long time in calling the Gentiles; and implanting them into Christ, according to his purpose and promises 187.

94. Externall Uniformity in the Churches of Christ, is of small accompt with him, in respect of Unity and spirituall worship 191.

95. God (many times) makes use of wicked, and unregenerate persons, for the preservation, and good of his owne children 197.

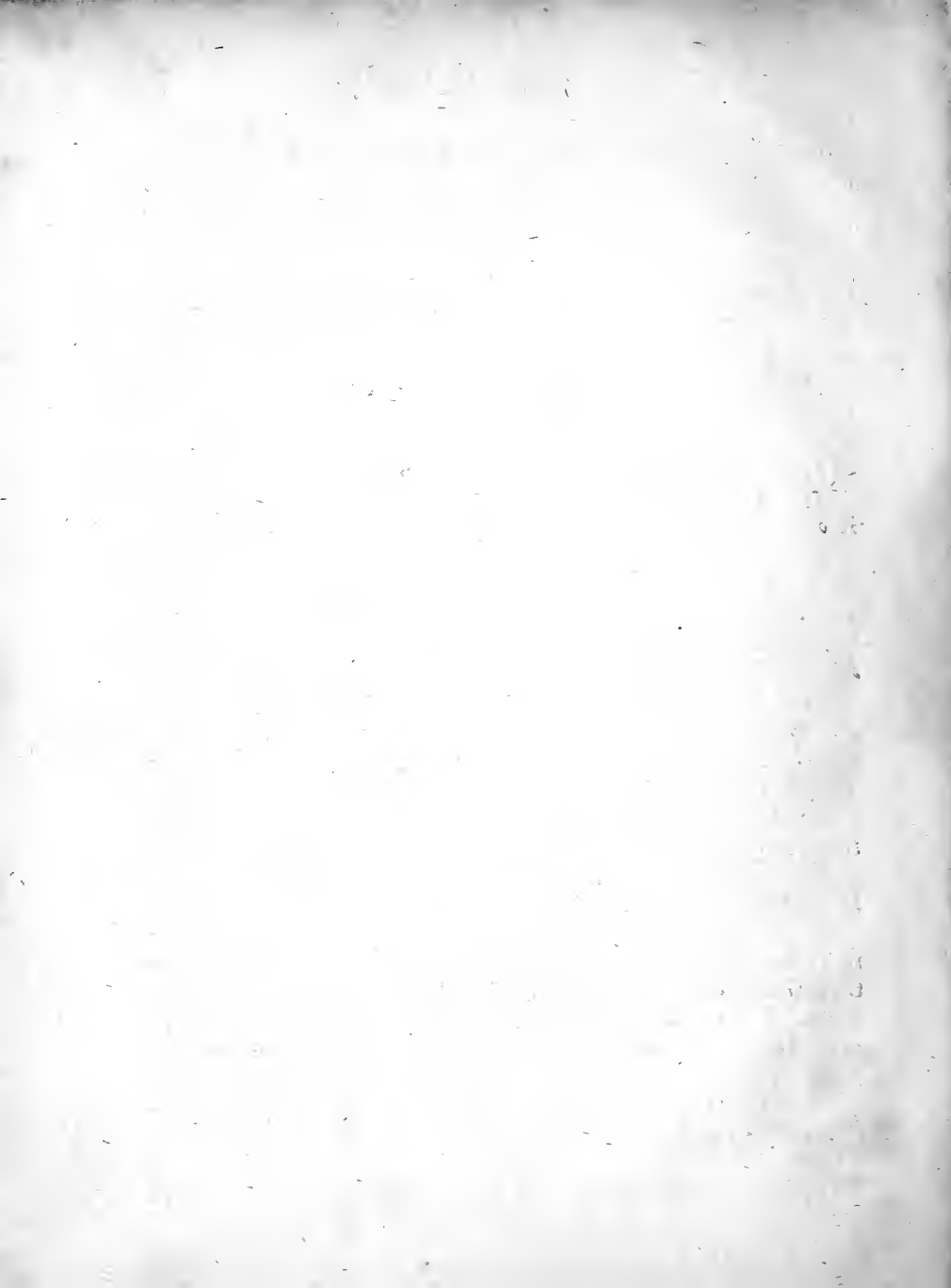
96. God (in his infinite wisdom, and goodness) observes the fittest times, in all his dispensations towards his people 199.

97. Jesus Christ gives forth as constant a supply of all grace to the meanest of his people, as to those who are most eminent 201.

98. The people of God bring glory to him, profit, and edification to the body of Christ in divers respects; according to the diversity of the Gifts, Graces, and operations of the spirit of God in them 202.

99. There is a continuall secret supply of strength from Christ to every believer in time of desertion, and temptation; to preserve them from totall falling away 205.

100. True Christians do communicate of their good things, as freely to the poore as to the rich 207.





THE SPIRITUALL USE OF A GARDEN OF FRUIT-TREES.

The first Observation in Nature .



THE Husbandman makes choice of what wild Plants he pleaseeth, to bring into his Orchards there to Graft, and order to fruit-bearing from yeare to yeare. He leaves other plants in the Woods and waste grounds, he lets them alone, and meddles not with them, but takes and leaves these, or those, as pleaseeth himselfe.

This is a *Similitude* of the State of Spirituall Fruit-trees, and shadowes out unto us this Proposition;

That God from all eternity made choice of what Spirituall Proposition Plants he pleased, to plant in his Garden the Church, and refused Shadowed others.

God in his eternall decree chose some persons, and refused others, as his word clearely manifests: he chose some wild plants (here, and there a few) to plant in his Orchard, to order to fruits bearing, and let others alone to grow wild, and bring forth their naturall fruits, and this upon his own free will and pleasure, with-

A

out

out any foresight of faith, repentance, good works, or any thing in us: This the Apostle shews Eph. 1. 4. *He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world:* Vers: 5. *according to the good pleasure of his will: before they had done good or evill,* Rom. 9. 13. *I have loved Jacob, and hated Esau.* and Jo. 13. 18. *I know whom I have chosen.*

And our Saviour tells us, Joh. 15. 16. *I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go, and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remaine.*

The Husbandman lets other Plants alone to grow wild, without the wall of his Orchard. Many wicked men, and women in the world which were passed by in his decree, and therefore are not brought into his Church, nor Ingrafted into Christ, who (in their generations) bring forth sower, bitter, and poysonous fruits. Rom. 9. 18. *He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.* That is: He giveth grace to those whom he hath chosen, and denies it to others, leaving them to themselves.

Use.
Esay. 61. 3.

The Consideration of this should be a strong and continuall motive to all those who have made their *Calling, and Election sure* (being perswaded upon good grounds that they are Trees of righteousness of the Lords Planting) to praise and admire the free grace of God, who hath chosen them to be his adopted children, *ingrafting them into Christ, and planting them in his Garden,* to bring forth pleasant fruits to himselfe.

We were all of us *wild Plants*, as bad by nature as the worst in the world, and God hath made choice of us, and left others: How should this make us admire his rich, and free grace in Christ to us, and to shew forth his praise in our Conversations? The Apostle tells us this is the very end wherefore we are *Chosen:* 1 Pet. 2. 9. *Yee are a chosen Generation, a Royall Priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darknesse into his marvelous light.*

There was no moving Cause why the mysticall Husbandman should make Choice of us rather than of others, as there is of *materiall Plants* The Husbandman looks upon their straightnesse, and fitnessse in other respects (it may be) wherefore he *chooseth* them

them before others. But the mysticall Husbandman hath all the grounds and Causes of choice within himselfe, Eph. 1. 5. according to the good pleasure of his will.

Let this therefore teach us, and stirre us up to bring forth all good fruits unto him in abundance, who hath so abounded in love, and mercy towards us, and hath let out his free grace in choosing of us. And although we cannot recompence the Husbandman, or make him the richer by our fruits, yet we may please him; and honour him thereby. Herein is my Father glorified; that ye beare much fruit, Job, 1 5. 2. 2. Use.

The second Observation in Nature.

THE Husbandman doth order his young fruit-trees with more tendernesse, and gentlenesse, then such as are strong, and well growne trees, because such (while they are small, and tender) are in more danger of breaking, and brusing, and other hurts, then they are afterwards. So that besides the great Wall, or Common fence about the Orchard, he makes a more speciall fence, with Bushes, Stakes, or the like, about each of them, and gives them more choice nourishment, by often watering them with good water that they may grow, and come on the faster.

This is another Similitude, and shadowes out unto us this Proposition.

That the dispensations of God towards weak Christians, are more gentle, then towards such as are grown strong. Proposition Shadowed.

The mysticall Husbandman hath Plants of severall degrees, and ages, in his Nursery and Orchard, and according to their capacities he dealeth with them: there are Children, Young men, and Fathers in Gods Family. 1 Job. 2. 12, 13, 14. the Children are ordered with more tendernesse, than the elder sort, Esay. 40. 11. He shall gather the Lambs in his Armes, and carry them in his bosome, and shall gently lead those that are with young. He useth them gently, with great tendernesse, So againe, Hos. 11. 1, 3. When Israel was a

The spirituall use of

child I loved him, Verſ. 3. I taught Ephraim alſo to goe, taking him by the Arms, I drew them with cords of a man, with Bands of Love, I was to them as they that take off the Yoke from the Jawes, and I laid meat unto them. God uſed them as a loving Father his children, or as a tender Nurse uſeth her young infant. He gives them Milke while they are Babes, and ſtronger meat when they are better growne, as we ſee 1 Cor. 3. 2. I fed you With Milke, and not with Meat; for hitherto ye were not able to beare it. Heb. 5. 14. Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age.

So alſo God in correcting his weak children, dealeth with them according to their ſtrength, as is made out in that Similitude Eſay: 28. 27. of the Husbandmans dealing with his Corne. The Fetches are not threſhed with a threſhing inſtrument, neither is a Cart wheele turned upon the Cummin, but the Fetches are beaten out With a ſtaffe, and the Cummin With a rod.

1. Uſe.

This is a ground of great comfort to weak, and doubting ſoules, God as a tender Father cheriſheth and nourisheth the beginnings of grace in them, he will not deale roughly and harſhly, but gently with them; He will not quench the ſmoking flax, nor breake the bruised Reede: but improve, and nourish weak beginnings in his children. Eſay. 42. 3. even as a Nurse cheriſheth her children. 1 Theſ. 2. 7. that they may increaſe towards perfection.

2 Uſe.

Let us learne to imitate God in this thing, to help, and encourage thoſe that are weak, in all good beginnings: Rom. 15. 1. Such as are ſtrong, ought to beare With the infirmities of the weak, And to comfort the feeble minded, and to ſupport the weak, 1 Theſ. 5. 14.

The third Obſervation in Nature.

There are many wild Fruit-trees in the Woods, Waſte grounds, and hedges; that beare faire, and beautifull fruits to looke upon, both for bulke and colour, and yet are very harſh, ſower, unpleaſant fruits; the husbandman takes no delight to eat of them, although they

they are usefull for some other purposes; these are but wild un-grafted trees, and their fruits are accordingly.

This is another *Similitude*, and shadowes forth unto us, That,

Many Spirituall Fruit-trees bring forth faire, and specious fruits Proposition to observation, which yet are unpleasant to the Husbandman. Shadowed.

There are very many men in the world, being eminent in Learning, Gifts, and Parts, who can performe many workes very exactly, they can Pray, Preach, and compose Workes, &c. and these things to the Observation of most, very excellently, gaining thereby great commendations from many, and (it may be) admiration from some, and yet these very Fruits, to the taste of the Husbandman, are very bitter and unpleasant, though they may be some way serviceable, and usefull to his Children, and servants, yet he himselfe, is not delighted with them, because they are from ungrafted trees, such as are wild and Corrupt by Nature, the Principle from which they proceed is Corrupt, and that makes the fruits corrupt.

Who did workes to the observation of men, more faire and specious, then the Pharises? and yet these their fruits were sturke naught: they were but painted fruits, faire to a carnall eye without any good tast or relish: Luk. 16. 15. Lu. 11. 39.

Let none content themselves with outward performances in the worship of God, though never so faire, and unreprouable to the eye of men, but looke to the Principles, to the frame of the spirit, ^{Use.} to the spring, from which any workes flow, and examine whether they be streames from the Divine Nature, or from common gifts and parts in the soule, whether they be shoots springing from the spirit of Christ, as from the Roote, or from a Naturall Principle, drawne out by some externall Causes, and selfe ends; for though they are never so plausible and beautifull in the eyes of men, they may be deformed in the eyes of God, and fruits altogether unpleasant to him.

Many things that are highly esteemed among men, are abomination in the sight of God: Luk. 16. 15.

This

I. Use.

This may serve to pull downe the high conceits which carnall and unregenerate men have of themselves, because of their *Gifts*, and *Parts*, their great and famous actings in the world: did they but see, and had they hearts to understand, and consider that bitter, and poysonous Roote, *Originall corruption*, which staines, and spoyles all their Fruits, their high conceits of themselves, and their Actings, would be much abated.

They are but *apples of Sodome*, *Splendida peccata*, glorious sinnes: for while the *Tree is corrupt*, the fruit is so, Math. 7. 18.

The fourth Observation in Nature.

WE find by Experience That Grafts, and stocks joyned together of contrary, or much different Natures, will not grow, nor thrive together; if they be joyned in Grafting, either the Graft growes not at all, or else very poorly, and weakly, and in a few yeares decays, and dies; But if the kinds of Trees are joyned together according to Rules of Nature, and Art, then they thrive together vigorously, and beare fruits plentifully.

This is another *Similitude* of the state of *Spirituall Fruit-trees*, and shadowes out unto us this *Proposition*, which also concures with the word, and experience.

*Proposition
Shadowed.*

That persons joyned in any relation, they have comfort, or affliction together according to their Natures.

This is certaine, in Nature, Morality, and Divinity, That so much as things differ in their Natures one from another, so great is the degree of dislike one of another: And so neere as they are in their Natures, and properties, so great is the degree of complacency and love, one of another. Likenesse is both the Cause, and the Bond of Love.

This is scene in all visible Creatures, many Instances might easily be brought to shew it. Likenesse in Natures, Manners, Customs, begets Love, and distance in these causeth dislike, and sometimes

sometimes *Haired*. 2 Cor. 6. 14. *What Fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousnesse? and what Communion hath light with darknesse &c?* which *Questions* include *Positions*.

This should teach all who intend to enter into the state of *Marriage*, to looke well to their choice, that it be upon good grounds, and not for worldly advantages in the first place, as most doe, and match a *Soule to the Earth*, between which there's no *likenesse*, nor proportion: Neither are they to looke so much at *likenesse* in the more low, and inferior respects, as *Person, age, birth, friends, Riches, &c.* (though care is to be had in these) as to that *great likeness*, in *Natures, Manners, Habits, and Principles of the Mind*, for these are the *springs, and the ties of Love*, therefore be not *unequally yoked together* 2 Cor. 6. 14. The sad experience of many thousands may be a sufficient warning to others.

If that *Love* flowes according to the *likenesse of natures*, then let this teach us to strive for *increase of Grace*, to have the *Image of God* more and more renewed, and drawn more lively upon our soules, because the more like we are to God, by having his *Image*, in the *Graces of his Spirit*, the more shall we find the love of God towards us, and the more will our *Love* be towards God: the *streame of the love of God* will flow more strongly into the soule, which will be *Rivers of pleasure* unto it: God will then *delight* in the soule, and the Soule will then *delight in God*, and this *Communion* will be *heaven upon earth*.

The fifth Observation in Nature.

THe husbandman is carefull to Engraft his Trees while they are young, he then formes, and fashions them by Pruning, and ordering of them, for he knowes when they are growen strong, and bigge Trees, these workes cannot be done so easily, if at all it be possible, therefore he sets about them while they are young-trees.

This

This is another *Similitude* of the state of *Mysticall Fruit-trees*, and holds forth unto us this *Proposition*.

*Proposition
shadowed.*

That God calls his people (for the most part) in Youth, and more rarely when they are old.

It is observed by *Experience*, That God worketh that great worke of Repentance, and Conversion of a sinner, from darknesse to light before old age, *generally*, and for the most part: Most commonly in youth, or full strength.

How seldome has it beene seene that an old person turnes to God, having served *Sathan*, and his lusts all his youth, and time, till old age.

God forbid that I should limit the boundles, and infinite Mercies of God, but may it not be said in this Case, as of a Rich man, his difficulty of being saved: *Matth. 19. 24. It is easier for a Camell to goe through the eye of a needle, then for a rich man to enter into the Kingdome of God.*

O how hard is it for an old habituated sinner, to turne to God, and forsake his old waies, and customes.

Such are settled on their Lees, and frozen in their dreggs, and are past feeling, their hearts are hardened, and consciences seared with a hot Iron, *Custom in sinne*, hath deprived them of all sence of sinning, *they cannot cease from sinne*, *2 Pet. 2. 14.* As soone may the Blackmore change his skinne, or the Leopard his spots, as old customary sinners learne to doe well, *Jer. 13-23.*

They being old ungrafted Trees, growing upon the stock of corrupt Nature, its a thousand to one but they shall grow there, untill the Axe be laid unto their roots to cut them downe, and they be cast into the fire, not to be consumed, but to burne for ever.

God gives men warning before hand, and tells them he will not accept of them hereafter, though they knocke at the Gate of Mercy, it shall be shut against them, if they will not now accept of Mercy. *Prov. 1. 24; 25. Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded &c: yee shall call, but I will not answer, I will laugh at your calamity, and mock*

mock When your feare cometh &c: The sinner being an hundred yeares old shall be accursed, Esay. 65. 20.

This calls to all *Spiritual young Plants*, to labour (by all possible meanes) to get this worke of *Engrafting into Christ*, performed *Now in their youth*. Now to be willing to be under the discipline of the husbandman, who offers, and desires to forme, and fashion their minds, according to the shape, and Mould of his holy word. Now therefore hearken to his voyce while it is called to day, lest ye be hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne, Heb. 3. 13. The worke (as to us) is more easily done *Now in youth*, then it will be hereafter; The *Twiggs* of the corrupt stock of sinfull Nature, are yet but *small*, and *slender*, and will more easily be cut off then when they are grown *old*, and *strong*. The Minde will bow, and bend more easily *in youth*, to the Rules of the husbandman, then it will hereafter.

Udum & molle
latum es; nunc,
nunc properan-
dus & acri Fin-
gendus sine fi-
ne rota. Pers.
sat. 3.

Things are learned *in time of youth*, with ease, which in old age are difficult, or impossible. There is an impossibility (in respect of the Lawes of nature, of altering the habits (in time of old age) either of *Body*, or *Mind*.

Its true: With God all things are possible, but we are to expect the usuall and ordinary dealings of God, and not to neglect the *meete seasons*, and *meanes*, for effecting our greatest work, in hope that God will doe it in the *most difficult times*, because all things are alike easie to him.

Quo semel est
imbuta recens
servabit odorem
testa diu. Hor.

Now because this is a thing of infinite, & everlasting consequence, and of greatest importance (of all other things whatsoever) to us; And that all may be stirred up to seeke after this *one necessary thing*, to be engrafted into Christ, *in time of Youth*, I will lay downe a few *Considerations* as *motives* to it.

1. The great Lord of Heaven and Earth, that gave us a being, our breath, our time, all that we have, he requires our *youth* to himselfe, and commands every one to give their first, and their full strength to him, he would have their *Virgin Love*, before they be vitiated, and deflowred by the Creature, Eccl. 12. 1. Remember now thy *Creator* in the daies of thy *Youth*, while the evill daies come not. As under the Law God commanded them to offer in sacrifice *Young Creatures*, *Bullocks*, *Rammes*, and *Lambs* of a yeare old, *young Pigeons*, &c. And the *Levites* (being his portion, must be num-

1 Considera-
tion.
Gods Com-
mand.

bred from a *Monthold*, and upwards, to signifie to us under the Gospell, that God requires the beginning of our strength in his service, *Mica. 7. 1. My soule desireth the first ripe fruits.*

2 *Considera- tion.* 2. If Youth slight God, and refuse to hearken to his call, and command, it is uncertaine whether he will call them afterwards, *2 Tim. 2. 25. If God peradventure Will give them Repen- of Gods call, tance.*

or acceptance He that calls to men, *to day if you will heare his voice*, hath not afterwards. said, *to morrow, or hereafter I will call againe*: Nay God hath said the contrary. *Prov. 1. 24. Because I have called, and ye refused: I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded &c. I also will laugh at your calamity, and will mock when your feare cometh.*

3 *Consid. Difficulty and bitterness, of Repentance if delayed.* 3. The longer the worke of *conversion and ingrafting* into Christ is delayed, the more difficult the worke will be, it is more easie in youth, then it will be afterwards. While the *Twigs and sprouts of corruption* are but young and slender, they are more easily cut off, bowed downe, or kept under, then they can be when they are growne old, hard, and strong. Who can bend an old strong tree? how hard is it to roote up a tree of many yeares growth, and that in a great and firme Rock? Such are the *sprouts of corruption in the root or rock of corrupt nature*. The oftener sinnes are repeated, the deeper impressions they make in the conscience, although small in themselves, *Gutta cavat lapidem, non vi sed saepe cadendo.*

Light, and small drops of water, falling often make an impression, even in a stone: What then will many great, crimson, and scarlet sinnes doe? Many youthfull sinnes of a high nature, break the bones in repentance.

4 *Consid. Shame of coming in so late.* 4. Though it be not a shame to come to God in old age, yet its a shame for a man that he came no sooner. Is it not a shame for a Souldier to runne from his Commander, and fight against him all his youthfull time, while he hath strength, and abilities, and to come in old age (when he is lame and decrepitate) and offer his service? Is it not a shame for a man to give his strength, and marrow to the Devill, and offer the dry bones to God?

What a shame is it for a man to begin to learne his Letters, and to spell at spectacle yeares? To offer the blind, the lame, and the sick, in sacrifice, will it be accepted? *Mal. 1. 8. Offer it now unto thy Governour,*

Governour, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person, saith the Lord of Hosts?

5. Such as hearken unto Gods call early, and in the spring of their 5 Consider :
yeares, have usually most honour from God, and clearer manife- (clearer evi-
stations of his love than others: such who give God their spring dences of the
time, their Virgin yeares, they usually know more of the minde of love of God.
God, and of the Love of God than others. Samuel was called of a
Child, 1 Sam. 3. and gave God his spring time, and God manifested
himselfe evidently to him, he had many and cleare manifestations of
the love of God. 1

The Prophet Jeremy, Ch. 1. 6. was called and sanctified from the
womb, and God revealed clearly his love to him, and care of him; 2
he became a great Prophet, and intimately acquainted with
God.

God wrought upon the spirit of Joseph, and ingrafted him 3
while he was but a young twigg, when he was but seaventeene yeares
old, he brought forth good fruit, for he could not endure the
the ill doings of his brethren, but told his father of it, Gen. 37. 2.
And we know what a darling Joseph was, not only to his earthly
father, but also to his heavenly father, who honoured him more
then all his brethren, and revealed many great secrets unto him.
He had not only tastes, and draughts of the love of God; but
rather streames and rivers of it flowed in upon him all his life
time.

Obadiah, a man recorded in Scripture for one fearing God, and 4
that from his youth, he was a choice, and singular man in his daies;
he feared the Lord greatly, 1 King. 18. 12. And the love of God
towards him was seene in his love to God and his people in a
time of great danger in preserving, and feeding of them: for none
can shew forth cleare evidences of the love of God, but those who are
greatly belov'd of God.

The Prophet Daniel was a Young man, when he began to feare 5
God, Dan. 1. and God shewed him manifold cleare evidences of his
love: God gave him knowledge and skill in all Learning, and wis-
dome, and in all visions, and dreames, vers. 17. He had cleare revela-
tions of the love of God in his Prayers, and Praises to God, im-
mediately by his spirit, and mediately by an Angell, who was sent

to tell him that his prayers were heard, and that he was a man greatly beloved.

6 The holy Prophet *Dauid*, of a young Twig was ingrafted into Christ: and he made God his trust from his youth, Ps. 71. 5, Being taught of God from his youth, vers. 17. and thereby made a man after Gods own heart: And whoever had sweeter communion with God (and consequently clearer evidences of his Love) then he expresseth in his *Psalmes*.

7 How great a Prophet was *John the Baptist*, who was filled with the Holy Ghost, and sanctified from the womb, a greater Prophet was never borne than he, *Luk. 1. 15.*

8 *John the beloved Disciple*, began to follow Christ Early in his youth; and Christ revealed secrets to him more immediately than to the rest of the Disciples. He leaned on his breast, and lay in his bosome, he attained to a full assurance of the love of God (which is the Consideration I here hold forth) it is frequent in his *Epistles*,

1 Joh. 4. 13, 14. We know we are of God, We know we are in him, we know we are
& 5. 19, 20. translated from death to life, &c. We know, we know, we know, many
1 Joh. 3. 14, 24. such passages of assurance he mentions.

If Christians desire to enter into Heaven, while they are on earth, this is the way, even to get into Christ early, as soone as may be.

So we see such as are Ingrafted into Christ, while they are young, the love of God is more clearly, and evidently discovered to them, and secrets from God, are revealed to them (usually) more than to others.

6 And lastly; Such as are Ingrafted into Christ early in the spring
Considerat. of their yeares, Such commonly attaine large growths, and measures
Greater mea- of grace, if they live long, and enjoy meanes, and helps suitable: A
sures of grace small measure of grace, though but as much as a graine of Mustard
and glory. seede. If a man begin with it betime, and husband it well, according to the Counsell, and wisdom of the spirit, will improve, and grow in many yeares, to a large measure, their Brook will become a River, and their River will become a Sea.

Every Act of grace adds something to the habit, so that the habits of grace are mightily confirmed by their frequent operations. Such when they come to be old Disciples, strong men in Christ, fathers, they have strong consolation, full assurance. Their graces increase

increase from strength to strength, from glory to glory, by the spirit of the Lord. 2 Cor. 3. 18.

And the more their Afflictions abound, the more are their graces increased, being improved by the spirit of God: and consequently the greater glory is laid up for them in the life to come, 2 Cor. 4. 17.

Now let it be considered. What infinite advantages arise to a Christian by Early beginnings, and setting forward in the waies of God betime; the Priviledges are exceeding great, and many.

These things may be great Encouragements to all young Plants to labour for them.

The sixth Observation in Nature.

WE know at the end of Sommer (the sunnes influences being withdrawn in a great measure) Fruit-trees cease growing; their fruits, and Leaves fall off and decay, & during the time of Winter, are shaken with winds, pinched with Frosts, and cold weather, & seeme (to those that cannot well judg of them) to be even as dead, which yet when the Spring of the yeare comes, the spirit, and sap (that is naturally existing in them all winter) is refreshed againe by the heat of the sunne that then approaches: the branches againe begin to bud, and by new supplies from the Roote grow forth, and bare store of wholesome fruits.

This is another Similitude, and shadowes out unto us this Proposition. (VVhich also concurreth with the word, and experience.) That

When the spirit of God withdrawes, then mysticall fruit-trees cease growing, their leaves, and Fruits fall, and they indure sore conflicts for a time, but at the returne of the spirit, they are restored to former comforts, with advantage.

As the *sun* is the *efficient cause* of life, and growth in naturall fruit trees, and all Vegetables, so is the *spirit of God* the *efficient cause* of motion, and growth in all *spirituall fruit-trees*; while the spirit is sensibly present, and works in the soule, there is *motion & growth, budding, blossoming, and bearing fruits*: but when the spirit withholdeth, and withdraweth, when this sunne goes afar off, (as to his sensible workings, and effects) and hides his face, then the *fruit-trees* are at a stand, and have no power in themselves to grow, or beare fruits. The Lord is a *Sun* unto his people, *Pf. 84. 11.* and the face of this sun is sometimes clouded, and hid from them, and is as if he were afar off, *Esa. 54. 7. For a small moment have I hid my face.*

The Church complaineth in the time of this spirituall winter, *Cant. 5. 6. My beloved had withdrawne himselfe and was gone.* VVhen this *Sun* is afar off, and clouded, then followeth a dark, and gloomy time: *Lam. 3. 1. I am the man that have seen affliction by the rod of his wrath: he hath led me, and brought me into darknesse, and not into light. I remembred God, and was troubled, I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed, Pf. 88. 16. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me, thy terrors have cut me off. Pf. 38. 8.* The Church in this long, and sharp winter (the sun being a far off) complaineth bitterly, and is almost in dispaire, *Esa. 49. 14.*

This is a wofull state, the greatest of all miseries on this side Hell, even the want of the light of Gods countenance to him that hath sensibly enjoyed it a long time together, and instead thereof to have the *terrors of God* fight against him, and make immediate impressions upon the soule; yet so it is with some of the servants of God for a time.

Former *Evidences* are then of no more strength, than the strength of meat and drink is to the body, after a long time of fasting, when the body hath beene shut up in prison, and almost starv'd for want of foode.

Its true indeed: former *Evidences* might something uphold in the sense of present distresse, if the soule were sure they were *undoubtedly true and sound*; because we know true grace once received cannot be lost: but there lies the doubt, and the ground of feare, and distrust, he calls all former *Evidences* into question, and perhaps (at some times) concludes against himselfe, that all are nothing, because of present feelings of the contrary.

I know a man who (about Ten yeares agoe) was cast under this *Temptation*, and had Experience of this woefull state, and condition, he lay in it for the space of *Seventene or Eightene Months*, or thereabouts.

Having early, in his youth (even the first houre of the day) passed through the pangs of the *new birth*, and *spirit of bondage*, & afterwards enabled to lay hold on Christ by faith, and by degrees, got up to a comfortable well grounded confidence of the love of God in Christ, wherein he walked chearefully many yeares together, yet afterwards (even about the middle of the day, according to the Prophets computation Psalm. 90. 10.) the Sun was clouded, and the *spirit*, and *sap* suspended, so that (by degrees) he lost not only the *sense of the light of Gods countenance* towards him, and the *sight of the graces of his spirit*, but questioned all his former *Evidences* of his interest in Christ, and (espetically at some times) even gave all for lost.

And notwithstanding the dayly use of all spirituall meanes, he still fell lower and lower, more and more feares and terrors increased in him, which were made more sharpe and heavy, by many *outward afflictions*, *great crosses*, and *disappointments* at the same time, which befell him in reference to his *body*, *name*, *outward estate*, *Calling*, *friends*, and *relations*, every one of which was a soire affliction, single and of it selfe; notwithstanding all came upon him in a short space, and that not long after great (and more then ordinary) *spirituall comforts*, & *evidences of the love of God in Christ*: which though they might have beene some ground to have upheld the soule from sinking so low, yet by degrees, were all weake and of no power to uphold, amidst such a throng, and present sense of heavy, and lasting *Temptations* as were upon both his *inward*, and *outward man*, but by reason thereof the immediate succeeding *desertion* was the more *sensible*, and took the deeper impression: As a man that falls suddenly from a high and eminent Condition of outward comforts, into great misery, and want, the sense of his present misery, is therefore the more pressing.

In this *sad and darke time*, he laboured (by *Prayer*, *Fasting*, *help of freinds*, and all waies of humbling himselfe) to get comfort, and support, but still it was hid from him, he was (by degrees) cast downe very low, and brought even to despair, in-somuch that

that at some times, through the violence of Temptations, and apprehensions of the absence, and losse of God, he cryed out, & roared as a man in torment of body, that had had some, disease, or burning in his Bowels: At some times when he heard the word preached, such terrors seased upon him, that he had no rest, neither in body nor mind, he could neither sit still, nor stand still, nor rest in any posture, fearefull injections thronged in upon him, and such woe-full apprehensions of an undone Condition, were, at those seasons especially, represented to the mind, that he was not able to expresse the horror of them.

And after a certaine time of the absence of the Spirit, in the feeling workings of it, and sence of the graces; *Corruptions*, at sometimes more especially, grew strong, *Passions and murmurings* against the righteous proceedings of God with him (and *Corruptions* also of other Natures) brake forth from time to time, which were, a sting to all other Miseries that befell him, and which were, being improved, and strongly set on by Sathan against him, grounds and foundations of the most fearefull apprehensions that came into his minde. The enemy pleading it against him, and that from many grounds of *Scripture misapplied, that no child of God did ever fall into the like, and labouring to perswade him that no one guilty of the like should possibly ever recover out of such a state.

*Such as these, Heb. 6. 4. It is impossible for these who were once enlightened, &c. and 2 Pet. 2. 20. The latter end is worse with them then the beginning.

This was a long and tedious winter, in which seldome any *sunne*, or *stars* appeared to him, and then but dimly, and soone clouded againe: the soule was, for the most part, filled with stormes, and tempests, sad apprehensions of many present evils, and feares of more, and greater to come upon him: The particular passages of which Condition, might be related, at large, were it convenient.

But the Lord hath said, he will not contend for ever, neither will he be alwaies wrath, lest the spirit faile before him: He correcteth in measure. At length the sun of righteousness began to arise with healing in his wings, and to cast some beames of light into his darke soule, which increased more and more unto the perfect day. As he fell by degrees, so by little and little, after a time, in the use of meanes, he was raised up againe, and restored to former comforts, with great and many additions and advantages.

The Lord put a new song into his Mouth, even praises and thanksgivings unto his God; Let the father of mercies and the God of all Comforts be for ever praised, for he comforteth those that are cast downe, When they cry unto him in their troubles, he delivereth them out of their distresse, he bringeth them out of darknesse, and out of the shadow of death, and breaketh their bonds asunder.

O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodnesse, and declare the wonders that he doth for the Children of men.

Now therefore: Seeing that a winter of desertion may come; Let us wisely prepare against it, by giving all diligence to make our Calling and Election sure, 2 Pet. 1. 10. To lay up Treasures in heaven. Now in the time of plenty, to store up against a time of famine, to gather now in Summer against a spending time in Winter: Now to gather Evidences, and sure grounds of the unchangeable love of God towards us, to make sure of our interest in Christ, that to we may be able to fight, and conquer, and to stand in the evill day, and having done all to stand, Eph. 6. 13.

This also may comfort all those that are in this case, who find that the Sunne is withdrawne, and gone a far off: Let them (in the use of all good meanes) wait and tarry the Lords teasure, he will certainly come in his time, Esay. 50. 10. Whoso walketh in darknesse and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himselfe upon his God; for the Sunne will againe shine forth and refresh such a soule, and though comfort and deliverance tarry, yet wait for it, it will surely come, it will not tarry, Hab. 2. 3.

The word, and promises, and the Experiences of performance to others, are sure grounds of hope; Esay. 54. 7. for a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee, in a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindnesse will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.

The time is at hand when it shall be said to these weather beaten fruit-trees, the winter is past, the raine is over, and gone, the Fig-tree putteth forth her greene figgs, the Vines with the tender Grape, give a good smell, Cant. 2. 11, 13.

Then shall they Bud, and blossome, and bring forth abundance of Fruits pleasant to the husbandman, And shall say unto him,

C

Let

Let my beloved come into his Garden; and eat his pleasant fruits;
Cant. 4. 15.

They shall dayly bring forth the fruits of Praise, Love, and obedience which he will like, and accept of.

The seventh Observation in Nature.

Fruit-trees that bring forth the fairest and most beautifull blossomes, Leaves, and shootes, they (usually) bring forth the fewest, and least fruits; because where Nature is intent, and vigorously pressing to doe one worke (spending its strength there) it is at the same time, weak about other workes: but distinct, and severall works of Nature; in moderate and remisse degrees, are all promoted at the same time.

This is another Similitude, &c. whence we learne; that,

Proposition
shadowed.

Generally those persons who are excessive, and most curious about the Formes of duties, have least of the power of goalinesse.

There are some who (wanting sincerity) lay out their thoughts, and endeavours about the outside of duties, they will be as forward, it may be, as any, about the externall parts of worship, who have nothing of the truth of Grace in them: Much formality, little, or no sincerity.

The Pharises were excessively carefull about the outside of Gods worship; Mat. 6. 2. 5. 16. In Preaching, Praying, fasting, giving Almes &c. their care was mainly to make cleane the outside, to carry things fairly to the world, that they might have the praise of men: broad Phylacteries, long Prayers, exactnesse in tithing Mynr, Annis, & Cummin, Strictnesse in observing the Sabbath, and outward Ceremonies, but where was sincerity all this while? they had the forme, but wanted the power of goalinesse. These were but Leaves, buds, or blossomes, but no Fruits, they were not profitable to them,

as to Eternall advantages. Mat. 5. 20. *Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes, and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

So it was among us of late yeares, bowing at the Name of Iesus, and Communion Table, Surplesse, Common-Prayer &c: these and such like were pressed with all eagerness, and strictness.

The body of Religion was large, and monstrous, but without a scule, or if any, it was Leane and feeble.

These kind of persons are like the *Indian Fig-tree* that Pliny speakes of, which had *Leaves* as broad as *Targets*, but *fruits* no bigger then a *Bean*.

Let every one take heed of this, and not suffer their spirits, and endeavours to runne out, and be spent, about things of *lesser moment*, and neglect the *greater*. Use.

This is a foule fault among us at this day, some men stand more about the *formes* of worship, than about the *power* of it; they looke so much after the *way, manner, and circumstances*, that they almost loose the *substance*; things which are but as *barks, or shels* to the *Kernels*, or as *Leaves* in respect of *fruits*.

Some others labour more for *Gifts*, then for *graces*; for *humane Learning*, than for *holiness*: All these are guilty of the same folly; as those who take more care about the *shape, and fashion* of the *Garment*, than the *health, and soundness* of the *body*: Or (to use the Metaphor in hand) they bring forth *Leaves*, instead of *fruits*, and so are *unprofitable trees*, lyable to Gods displeasure, and cutting downe every moment: and also to be accompted (by *discerning Spirits*) to be such as have *little, or nothing* of The power of *godlinesse*.

The Eighth Observation in Nature.

THe *Fruits* of trees discover plainly of what kind the *Trees* are: the *Leaves* and *blossomes* (especially of some kinds) may deceive us, but the *fruits* cannot deceive us, but discover manifestly of what *Nature* the trees are.

From this Observation we learne: That

Proposition
shadowed.

By the Fruits of Spirituall Trees, we may conclude the Nature of the Trees.

The waies, and Conversations of men discover what their Natures are: If men of discerning Judgments will but exactly observe, and try the Actions of others, they may (by degrees) conclude from what Principles they act.

Its true indeede: from the Actions and waies of some persons, a man cannot easily conclude this; vices in some are clothed in the habits of Vertues, howsoever of some others this is more cleare. The worke of grace in the hearts of some is so cleare, and apparent in their lives, and Conversations, that if men will but judge according to Scripture rules, the worke will be manifest. So on the other side concerning Profane, and scandalous persons, a man may without breach of charity conclude such persons to be (at present) in the gall of bitternesse, and bond of iniquity.

And though Formall Professors may for a time deceive us, by their Leaves, and blossoms of good words, shewes, Professions, Formes, and outward Observations (Wolves may have on Sheeps clothing) Yet if we tast, and observe their fruits, after a time we shall know them, Mat. 7. 16. by their fruits ye shall know them. So againe, Lu. 6. 44. Every tree is knowne by his own fruit.

1 Use.

This should teach every one to try their owne fruits, by the word of God: for thereby will be comfort to them that feare God: they may have continuall grounds of rejoycing when they observe their fruits to be good, to be such as the husbandman calls for, and approves of; they may thence conclude that they are Trees of the Lords planting, Engrafted Trees, and this is a ground of joy indeed, to know our names are written in heaven. And here also will be grounds of conviction to unsound Christians; for by a certaine knowledge of the Fruits, they may have a certaine knowledge of the Trees. And therefore, let such (seeing, and considering their bad fruits) give themselves no rest, untill they find the nature of their fruits changed, whereby they may conclude, that the nature of the tree is also changed.

2 Use.

The thorough, and serious consideration of this Proposition, may be

be a speciall meanes to support, and satisfie the spirits of Gods people who are in a doubting condition, and question *the truth of their graces*; for let such consider, that hereby they may receive the best satisfaction that believers can possibly receive, (next unto the immediate testimony of the spirit of God) to look upon, and try their *fruits* by the word; for *fruits* are infallible evidence of the nature of the Tree that brings them forth. Therefore observe; if these, and such like fruits are brought forth, the Tree is certainly good, an ingrafted tree. If there be fervent desires, pantings, and breathings of the soule after God, delight in the word, and ordinances, Love to God, and his people, secret goings out of the soule after, and closing with spirituall things, disliking and hating corruptions, and whatsoever is against the mind of God, and opposing of it, With a rising of spirit against it, With zeale, and indignation; if there be a secret joy, and cheerefullnesse in the spirit when things goe well with the people of God, when holinesse, and the power of godlinesse is like to be set up, promoted, and encouraged, and sin suppressed: if the spirit be stirred to pray against the dominion, and power of wicked and unregenerate men, not onely such as are prophane, but also such as are but morally honest, yea though they be accomplisht with the utmost of naturall and morall endowments, prising and preferring sincerity and holinesse in any person, before all gifts without grace.

These fruits (I say) are reall and infallible evidences of a good tree, of a Tree ingrafted into Christ, and that soule that finds them in it selfe, (if the spirit of God shine upon them, and shew them) may as certainly conclude upon the *truth of grace* there, as if an Angell were sent from God to tell such a one, that he is beloved of God.

It is as possible in nature, for *Thornes* to bring forth *Grapes*, or *Thistles*, *Figgs*, as for a *Bad tree* (a person out of Christ) to bring forth these fruits. Let not such soules (therefore) so dishonour God, wrong themselves, and gratifie Sathan, as to question the truth of grace in themselves; but rejoyce evermore, because their names are Written in heaven. Hereby we know we are translated from death to life, because of these fruits, 1 Joh. 3. 14.

The Ninth Observation in Nature.

THe branches of fruit-trees if cut off, and stuck in the ground, they will (in the spring) bud and blossom, and be as forward as the boughes that grow upon the stock, or root, and will seeme to grow, but when the sun drawes neere, and the weather growes hot, these boughes begin to decay, and wither, they cannot indure heat, they within a while, shew that they want a roote.

This is another *Similitude* of the state of spirituall fruit-trees, and shadowes out unto us this Proposition.

*Proposition
shadowed.*

That some persons flourish with a profession for a time, but in the heat of affliction they fall off.

Many Christians will flourish with a profession in the time of prosperity, when many showers of blessings, and outward comforts fall on them; but when the hot sunne of troubles, and afflictions begins to scorch, and the dewes and raine of temporall blessings are taken away and withheld, then they shew themselves to be but as Boughes stuck in the ground, and without roots, which bud and blossom, but can bring forth no fruit.

These are they spoken of in the Parable. Luk. 8. 13. The seeds that falls upon the Rock, springs up as well, it may be, as that on the good ground, but when the sun growes hot, it scorseth it, and it withers, Mat. 13. 21. He hath no roote in himselfe, but endureth for a while, and in time of persecution he is offended.

Such the Apostle speakes of 1 Joh. 2. 19. They went out from us, because they were not of us &c.

This shewes us the end of Hypocrites, formall professors, who have no root in Christ: such as are not really ingrafted into Christ, they will certainly fall away at last, none can persevere, but by being in Christ, Job. 27. 10. Will he, the Hypocrite, alwaies call upon God. Every plant which my heavenly father hath not planted shall be rooted up. Mat. 15. 13.

This

This being so, it should make every one give all diligence to be ² Use fully assured, whether they be but as *Boughes stuck in the ground without roots, or branches of the true Vine*, Joh. 15. 5. Such as are really ingrafted into the *true Vine*, the hottest sun of persecution can never hurt them, the gates of Hell shall not prevaile against them. Such shall be as a *Tree planted by the waters, that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat commeth, but her leafe shall be greene, and shall not be carefull in the yeare of drought, neither shall cease from yeelding fruit*, Jer. 17. 8.

The Tenth Observation in Nature.

WE seek for the best kinds of fruits to engraft in our Orchards, we are carefull, and diligent with much labour, cost, and time, to obtaine the most usefull, and most profitable fruits; though we take some paines for ordina^y kinds, yet we especially desire the best fruits.

From this Observation we are taught: That

We should bend all our desires, and endeavours, that the best gifts, graces, and Fruits, may, especially increase. Proposition shadowed.

The Apostle saies, 1 Cor. 12. There are diversities of gifts wrought by the same spirit, all of them desirable and profitable, but some are more profitable than others, which he exhorts us to look after, and desire especially, Vers. 31. *Covet earnestly the best Gifts.*

There is a precellency, and greater worth in some Fruits than in some others, 1 Cor. 13. *I will shew you a more excellent way.* And Phil. 1. 10. *That ye may approve things that are excellent or (as some read it) things that differ. Follow after charity, and desire spirituall gifts, but rather that ye may prophecy,* 1 Cor. 14. 1. And vers. 12. *For as much as ye are zealous of spirituall gifts, seek that ye may excell to the edifying of the Church.* He preferres one grace before another; *And now abideth faith, hope, and love, these*

these three; but the greatest of these is love. 1 Cor. 13. 13.

1 Use.

This reproves those who content themselves with the lowest, and meanest gifts, graces and fruits, and strive not after the best, and chiefest. Many having gotten some competent abilities, they goe on in a formall way, running in a round, or Circle, making little, or no progression at all, no increase, or growth. Yea, sometimes for want of exercise, and improvement of their Gifts, they loose what they had, and become very Drones, and Dunces.

2 Use.

We should consider, and examine which are the best gifts, graces, and spirituall fruits, that so we may apply our selves to gaine, and increase them especially.

First then: Such are best, as are most usefull and profitable to our selves and others.

Profit and edification, is the great end, why the spirit of God gives gifts, 1 Cor. 12. 7. The Apostle valued those gifts most, which were most for Edification. 1 Cor. 14. 19. I had rather speake five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others, than 10000 words in an unknowne Tongue. Knowledge, Tongues, humane Learning, and Parts, are little worth, unlesse they be used to edification. What then shall we thinke of those men who use them for ostentation, and to gaine admiration?

Diod. Annot.

Secondly: If we find any gift, grace, or spirituall fruit commended to us in speciall and particular in the word, such hath the highest commendation that possible can be, as the gift of Prophecie above other gifts, 1 Cor. 14. 1. Desire spirituall gifts, but rather that ye may prophesie. Which is a gift to be able publicly to expound the word of God, and to apply it to the edification of the Church.

And of Graces, Love is the chiefest, 1 Cor. 13. 1. Now abideth Faith, Hope, and Love, these three; but the greatest of these is Love. And 1 Pet. 4. 8. Above all things have fervent love among your selves. So for Meeknesse of Spirit, God himselve commends it to us in particular, for a most speciall fruit, 1 Pet. 3. 4. The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, is a thing with God of a great price.

Thirdly:

Thirdly : those graces wherein wee most resemble God the father, and Christ, such are most excellent, as *Love, Mercy, Humility*: we are cald upon (as might be shew'd at large) to imitate the father, and the sonne, in these things *especially*; VVhat is more sweet and amiable in the Conversations of men, than *Love, Mercy, Humility*? these are *Graces, and fruits* of highest esteeme both with God, and men.

Such as hold forth Truths in publike, should bring forth the *best Fruits*: in expounding, and applying the word, they ought to lay open those truths that are *most suitable to Persons, times and occasions*, and decline other things of *lesser moment*: and (in particular subjects) to bring forth those things that doe most naturally arise from the word, according to the genuine sense of it, without straining, or wresting, (there being such infinite variety of matter) that it may be as the *first, and purest Liquor of Grapes*, (or as *life hony*) that runnes without straying, which is (by far) the *best*.

Men should stand most upon the *Essentials* of Religion, and Christianity: *How to get an interest in Christ, and then how to improve it: to grow in grace, to subdue Corruptions; how we may get, and maintaine a constant, habituall Communion with God.*

And for our Meditations, Speeches and *Actions* we must still looke at the *best*, if there lye many, and various duties before us, and all cannot possibly be donne, we ought to set our selves to consider, and find out which are *most convenient, most necessary, most profitable, and best*. And accordingly apply our selves thereto: and not to goe (hand over head) to any of them, upon this ground, for that it is a *good worke, it is our duty*, for so perhaps we shall neglect a *more excellent, and more profitable worke*, and misse of the *best, and choicest fruits*.

The Eleventh Observation in Nature.

WE finde by experience that after a plant is engrafted, both the Graft and the stock will shoote forth, and if the Graft grow vigorously, and strongly, then the shootes of the stock are but weake, but if the shootes of the stock break out strongly, then the Graft growes but weakly, therefore the husbandman takes paines often to cut off the shootes that grow upon the stock, that so the graft may grow the better.

This is another *Similitude* of the state of Mysticall Fruit-trees, and shadowes forth unto us this Proposition. That

*Proposition
shadowed.*

While the Spirituall part in us acts and growes strongly, the fleshy part acts but weakly: So also, if the flesh be strong, the spirit is weake.

In all persons Regenerate, there are two *Natures* the one contrary to the other, the *Spirit*, and the *flesh*, the *new man*, and the *old man*, the *Divine Nature*, and *Corrupt Nature*: these two *Natures* abide in us, and act in us so long as we live, in this earthly Tabernacle; and they strive one against the other, so that it is the care of the husbandman, and is, or should be our continuall labour, and businesse to strengthen the *spirituall part* against the *fleshy part*.

We find by *Experience*, That while the *spirituall part* acts lively, and strongly, the *Carnall part* is downe; While it is by the Spirit of God, raised up to a high pitch, and enlarged with delight, and joy in God and Communion with him in *Meditation* and *Prayer*, then all the while Corruptions are low, and weake, and (as it were) subdu'd.

The Apostle tells us what we must doe to keep downe Corruptions; *Gal. 5. 16. This I say, walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.* While the soule is in a spirituall frame, and hath cleare apprehensions of the love of God in Christ: then it is active and lively in all the waies of God, though the flesh, be

as a strong man Armed; yet when this spirituall man, (that is stronger then he) riseth up, and bestirs himselfe, he is able to bind him, and keepe him under, and rules in the soule, untill there be an abating, and slackening of his spirituall strength, and then the flesh will soone discover it selfe, and stirre, and act, as temptations, and occasions arise: and then on the other side, the Spirituall part acts but weakely, it is downe, low, flat, wanting life and power, during such stirrings, and workings of the flesh. *Rom. 7. 23. I see a Law in my members warring against the Law of my mind, and leading me captive &c.*

This should teach us often to observe, and take notice of the *actings of our spirits*, of the frame and temper of them, whether *the stock*, or the *Graft*, bud the faster, what shootes the soule puts forth, of what kind, what the motions of our soules are, whether *holy and spirituall*, or *carnall, and earthly*; cutting off these, and preserving, and cherishing those. 1 Vse.

If we were watchfull daily, and tooke paines with our spirits to keepe them up in a *spirituall frame*, in Communion with God, then (by degrees) the *shootes*, and *growths of the spirituall part*, would become strong, and the *shootes of the flesh* weak and feeble.

O that this were well weighed and practised by Christians: it is the very *life, Spirit and power of godlinesse*, thus to walk With God, in communion with him: hereby we are enabled to doe, and suffer all things for God, and to resist, and keep under the *flesh and all Enemies*: This is the life of our life, and heaven upon Earth.

The twelfth Observation in Nature.

THe neerer the Branches of a Tree are to the Roots, the faster, and firmer they are, and more free from tossing and shaking by the winds; Such grow more fast and steady. And the farther off the Branches are from the Roore, the more loose, and unsteadfast they are, the more they are waved, and tossed by the winds, and motion of the Aire.

This is another *Similitude* of the state of spirituall Fruit-trees, and shadowes out unto us this Proposition. That,

Proposition
shadowed.

The more closely a Christian walks with God, the more steadfast he is, and more free from spirituall Enemies.

Every *Mysticall* Fruit-tree that beares good fruit is *Ingraffed*, or implanted into *Iesus Christ*, the Roore, and Stock, from whence all the spirituall sap, and life, is drawne and derived, whereby the Branches grow and beare fruit.

And experience shewes, the neerer the Boughs and Branches are unto the Roore, the closer we walke with God, the more Communion we have with the father, and with his sonne *Iesus Christ*, the more fixed stable, and unshaken we are.

When the soule is a farre off from Christ: it is carried, and tossed about, with divers, and strange conceits, and Opinions, doubts, feares, troubles, and temptations, is moved this way, and that way, as the top branches of a Tree with the wind.

The Prophet *David* walked with God, and kept close unto him, *Psalm. 16. 8. I have set the Lord alwaies before me, he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved, therefore he saies, his heart was established, and would not shrink, but was enabled to insult over all Enemies, Psalm. 46. 2. I will not feare though the earth be moved, &c.*

As this shewes us the happinesse of those who walke with God, so also we may hence see the miserable Condition of those who are out of Christ: they being a far off from Christ, the whole frame of their soule is unsetled, they are like the raging sea that cannot rest: *Esay. 57. 20. their Condition is as was said of Reuben, Gen. 59. 4. unstable as water.*

James.

James. 1. 8. They are unstable in all their waies: because a far off from Christ.

Let this stirre us up to a watchfull, and circumspect care in our 2 Use. Conversations: to get, and keep close to Christ: Such as walke closely with God, live in another sphere, in a higher Orb, than the common world, though they live with them: And notwithstanding there be Commotions, and stirs, and turning of the world upside downe, yet in the spirits of these, all is calme, and quiet, their hearts are fixed and unmoved: they feare not evill tydings, Psal. 112. 7, 8. because their hearts are fixed, trusting in the Lord, Psal. 15. 5. They are as Mount Syon that cannot be removed, but abide fast for ever.

The thirteenth Observation in Nature.

IN Materiall fruit-trees the sower Nature of the wild Plants that are grafted upon, does still continue in the stock, or roote, and is not taken away, or lost by Engrafting, it is only restrained, and kept under by the Graft. The Nature of the Graft is predominant in the Tree, and overrules in bringing forth fruits, according to its owne kind, (although with some small degree of the sower Nature of the stock mixed with it) And the two Natures of the Graft, and stock continue mixed together, so long as the Tree lives.

This is another Similitude of the state of Mysticall Fruit-trees, and shadowes forth unto us this Proposition.

That Corrupt Nature abides in believers as long as they live, ^{Proposition} and is but in part subdued by grace. ^{shadowed.}

Corruption of Nature though it be not cast out, yet it is by degrees, more and more subdued, restrained, and kept under, Rom. 6. 6. The old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, it is destroyed as to the ruling power of it, but not as to the being of it.

The

The spirit of God working *Principles of Grace*, or the *Divine Nature* in the soule does curb, reſtaine, and (as it were) bind *Corrupt Nature*, which of it ſelfe is as a *strong man armed*, but when a *stronger than he cometh*, he bindeth him and keeps him under, *Luk. 11. 21.* Not that he caſteth him out, as a Land-lord, that turnes out an *old Tenant*: when he puts in a new one: The Apoſtle complaineth of it, *Rom. 7. I find a law in my members warring againſt the law of my minde, &c.* The experience of all Believers proves this ſufficiently.

1 *Vſe.*

This ſhould humble us greatly, ſeeing we carry about with us continually, this *uncleane bird in our boſomes*, this grand enemy of God, Of all the *Arguments of humiliation*, this is the greateſt of all, this comprehends all.

2 *Vſe.*

We ſhould admire the infinite love of God to us, that notwithstanding *Corruption of Nature*, hath delight in his people.

3 *Vſe.*

This ſhould make us continually watchfull againſt this cloſe deceitfull enemy, leaſt it inſnare us, and prevaile againſt us; it prevailed againſt *David, Solomon*, and the moſt holy men, how then does it concerne us to watch.

4 *Vſe.*

Let us labour for *increase of grace*, for as that growes, *Corruption* waſteth, or is kept under.

5 *Vſe.*

The *abiding of Corruption in us*, ſhould make us long for the glory that is to be revealed, when there will be a full deliverance from *Corruption of Nature*, and all the effects, and conſequences of it.

The Fourteenth Obſervation in Nature.

IT is not the tallneſſe, nor largeneſſe, nor any outward beauties in *fruits, trees*, that makes them valued, but it is their *Natures*, and properties in bringing forth good fruits.

This teacheth us: That,

*Propoſition
ſhadowed.*

It is not any outward excellencies, but the Image of God upon the ſoule, that is the glory of a perſon.

Whatſo:

Whatsoever hath any likenesse or resemblance of God, is beautifull, and has a glory upon it, and by how much neerer it drawes to God in likenesse, so much more glorious it is.

Grace or Holinesse makes Creatures beautifull and glorious, in the eyes of God.

Israel was chosen to be an holy people unto the Lord, Deut. 7. 6. and this was their glory, Deut. 26. 18. they were high above all nations, in praise and in name, and in honour, &c. This was their wisdom and understanding, and praise in the sight of the Nations, Deut. 4. 6. They said of them, surely this great Nation, is a wise and understanding people, &c. This was their beauty, their glory, Deut. 10. 21. He is thy praise, &c. A hoary head is a Crowne of glory: but when? Even when it is found in the way of righteousness, Pro. 16. 31. Yea This spirituall wisdom in a young head, is a Crowne to it. Prov. 3. 5. All the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

This shewes as the blindness, and darkness of unregenerate minds, who see no brightness, nor glory in the Sun, no beauty in holinesse; or the Image of God; Nay, who rather account it a disparagement: They esteeme no more of this glory, then they did of our Saviour, the Lord of glory, who in a carnall eye had no forme, nor comelinesse, no beauty in him that they should desire him, Esay, 53. 2. These persons glory in their shame, and are ashamed of that which is true glory. 1 Vse?

Oh Let us labour after this glory, which is more to be desired then gold, yea than much fine gold, Ps. 19. 10. That which the world accounts glory, is but a shadow of glory to this. This excelling that infinitely more, then the light of the sun excelleth the light of a Candle, or of a Glow-worme: This is the Dyamond in the Ring, the Jewell in the Casket, the Treasures in the field, to buy which a wise Merchant will sell all that he hath. 2 Vse?

The fifteenth Observation in Nature.

In Materiall Fruitstrees there is a close, and firme knot between the stock, and the graft, whereby they are joyned fast together, and made one body; which knot, and conjunction continues, and holds fast, as long as the trees live.

This

Proposition shadowed. This *Observation* shadowes out untous . That *There* is a firme and constant union between Christ , and every Believer .

All believers are implanted, or ingrafted into Jesus Christ, the true Vine or Stock, and by this ingrafting there is a firme knot, or tye between the stock or root, and the Branches, which holdeth for ever, Rom. 6. 5. *We are plantd together, &c.* & Rom. 11. 24. *We are grafted contrary to nature into a good Olive Tree .* So also, 1 Cor. 6. 17. *He that is joynd to the Lord, is one spirit, This union, or true-loves-knot, is made by the spirit on Christs part, and by faith on ours, wrought by him .*

1 Use. This shewes us the sure way and safe condition of every believer, they shall never fall away, Christ will not loose one of his members. Their enemies shall never be able to prevaile against them: in fighting against them, they fight with God, they set themselves against Christ: *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* Acts 9. 4. Yea they strike at the very face of God, and at the most tender part, *Zech. 2. 8. He that toucheth you, toucheth the Apple of his eye.* So that God will certainly preserve his people.

2 Use. This is a ground of solid comfort to every believer: they stand in the neereſt Relations and eyes to Christ that possibly can be: *As branches to the root or stock; as a peculiar people to a faithful God: As friends to Christ; as Brethren to Christ; as Heires and Co-heires with Christ; as children to a father , as a wife to the husband; as members to the head .*

And this Union once made is sure for ever.

3 Use. Let us prize the Priviledges of this union, that so we may enjoy the sweetnesse of it; *Walking with God, light of his countenance, communion with the Father, and with his sonne Iesus Christ, &c.*

4 Use. Seeing we are joynd to Christ, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation?

The sixteenth Observation in Nature.

FRuit-trees are not to be permitted to grow old in Nurseries, but being ingrafted and prepared (in certaine yeares) for Orchards, and fields, ought to be transplanted; save only some few, here and there one, of the best kinds, whereof to gather grafts for the young plants.

This shadowes out unto us: That

University men ought (in convenient time) to goe forth into the service of the Church, and Commonwealth, except some choice persons, fit for Government of the Societies. Proposition shadowed.

As Materiall nurseries are for the increase and multiplying of Fruit-trees, where they are prepared (in certaine yeares) for Orchards and fields: So Universities, or Mysticall Nurseries, are for the instruction, and discipline of youth, that they may be usefull, and fruitfull Trees, when transplanted abroad into the Church of God.

If Fruit-trees in a Nursery (where there are such multitudes in a little compasse) were permitted to grow there many yeares, they could not possibly spread, nor enlarge their Branches, whereby they might beare store of Fruits, but would fret and gall, and rub off the Barke, Blossomes, and fruits, of one another.

So neither is it possible for multitudes of Students in a University to spread, and shew forth their gifts and abilities in Preaching, or otherwise (for benefit of others) as they may doe abroad, where every man may exercise every day, or as oft as he pleaseth.

Secondly: Fruit-trees in a Nursery must not grow there, being ready for transplanting, because such hinder many other (small young plants, which might be brought into the Nursery, to be ingrafted and prepared, if the great ones were transplanted).

So ought it to be in Universities; For unlesse the ancient Students (having had a convenient time to fit themselves for publike employments) doe remove, many hopefull young plants will be

kept out, which otherwise, if brought under the discipline of godly Governours, and ingrafted, will (in due season) bring forth much good fruit.

Thirdly; If *Fruit-trees* (after they are prepared in the *Nursery* for fruit-bearing) be removed, and transplanted abroad into severall Countries, many may partake of their fruits, they will be profitable from yeare, to yeare, which cannot be, if they be kept still in the *Nursery*.

So if *University men* (having obtained *Gifts and Graces*) goe forth, and exercise their *Talents* in the Church of God, many may have profit, and advantage by them, who otherwise cannot.

Besides these *Reasons*, the word requires that able, and usefull men should goe forth into the Church of God, Luk. 10. 1, 2. Our *Saviour* (as a Master, or governour of a great Society) having disciplined, and taught his *Disciples*, and made them fit for the *Ministrie*, he sent out *Threescore and ten* of them at one time, having sent *Twelve* not long before, Luk. 9. 2. And because the *harvest* is great, and there is need of *Labourers*, we ought to pray the Lord of the Harvest, that he would send forth more, Luk. 10. 2.

But such as are fit, & yet unwilling to goe, may be asked sharply, by way of reproofe, why stand ye here all the day idle. Mat. 20. 6. Many stand idle in the Market place, while they might, and ought to goe, and labour in the Lords Vineyard.

Having a *Talent*, or more, they must one day be called to an account what use they have made thereof, and if they have not well employed them, nor gained by them, they will make but a sad reckoning, Mat. 25. 19. *the Lord commeth and will reckon with them.*

Use. The *Inference* hence is in every mans eye, that such whom it concernes, doe consider what their duty is in this regard, and accordingly apply themselves.

It is my humble advice, with all love, Let not any now (as too many in former times) having gotten *Fellowships in Colledges*, account them as twere their *free-hold for life*, having accommodations to set up their rest, and say its good being here, what can I expect better, if I goe forth, as though *selfe*, were all a man should ayme at.

If any man be offended, and object, why should I meddle thus far;

far: I answer, I am within the bounds of my Orchard, and the subject at first proposed: Not only to treat of Ordering Materiell Fruit-trees, but also to make a spirituall use of them, where I judge the Similitude apt, and pregnant: I am a friend and no adversary in speaking the truth in Love.

The Husbandman having purged his Nursery, and planted therein many choice plants (ingrafted into the true Vine) he expects better fruits there, than former ages have afforded. And it may be spoken to the honour of the Husbandman, and of the Reformation hitherto carried on by him) that there are pleasant and wholesome fruits brought forth by many Trees of righteousness of his planting Oh that it might be said, there are no Wild Vines among them, bringing forth sower, and bitter Grapes, or empty Vines which bring forth fruit unto themselves. That the adversaries of the truth might not have occasion to charge any, especially such as have the name of godly persons, with Pride, high carriages, earthly mindedness, and such like grosse corruptions, which are the fowlest Blots that can light upon Professors, and bring most dishonour to God, to his Gospell, and to themselves.

Esay. 61. 3. Jer. 2. 21. Ho. 10. 1.

If men in these places have sincere, and right ends in their eye, and pursue them accordingly, even the interest of our Lord Jesus Christ in the increase of his kingdom, As they may thereby bring much honour to God, happiness to themselves, edification to his Church, So also the same is the right and ready way to establish, and perpetuate Universities.

Therefore take my counsell, and not mine, but the Apostles, 2 Tim. 1. 6. stirre up the gift that is in thee; and againe, 1 Tim. 4. 4. Neglect not the gift that is in thee.

Such as have Talents whereby they may profit the Church of God, ought to employ them for that purpose, according as God hath fitted them.

It is true indeed; Some able men in Universities, as godly Tutors in every Colledge, besides Governours, may be as profitable to the Church of God there, as if they went forth; but this reacheth not the generality of men in such places. Therefore the exhortation may be seasonably carried on: I know the best men had need of stirring up to their duties.

And that this may willingly be imbraced, Consider what neede there is of faithfull, able, and painfull Teachers abroad in e-

very Country: The Harvest truly is great, and such labourers are but few: Multitudes, Multitudes of people, lye in the gall of bitternesse, and bond of iniquity, and would it not be a glorious worke, to be instrumentall in turning them from darknesse to light, and from the power of Sathan unto God: yea; and the worke also will make such Instruments glorious, Dan. 12. 3. They that be wise, shall shine as the brightnesse of the firmament, and they that turne many to righteousness, as the starrs for ever, and ever.

I shall say no more: *verbum sat sapientibus*, there are a world of Encouragements to this worke, rewards, and wages are in it, besides infinite Treasures laid up for them to all Eternity.

2 Use.

Secondly: such as are Governours in Universities ought to take speciall care that men goe forth, who are fitted for publike imployments, and not to leave it to their wills, and pleasures; for although some are carried out by the spirit, and spirituall Principles, to spend, and be spent in the work of the Lord, yet some others (even good men) give way to selfish, carnall Principles, and neglect it: Therefore Governours ought herein to follow Christ.

*by making Orders, and Example, and to * send them forth to preach Christ. Rules in the severall societies for that end; and not to walk in this great respect by statutes made in dark, corrupt times; Is it likely such should be meete Rules woe unto them if they preach not the Gospell, whether they for these Gospell times, have a settled maintenance or no: If they be faithfull herein, these times of light, and Re-formation? then Christ whose worke it is, will certainly see they have

all necessities ministred unto them: As the earth is the Lords and the fulnesse thereof so all hearts are in his hand too; which he turnes as he pleaseth. Mens hearts shall be opened to them, not only to receive and take in the word which they bring, but also to give out of their substance, & to assure them of it more certainly, then they can be by any other meanes: But when men lie still neglecting the Lords worke, watching for an advantage, to get some great place, worth so much by the yeare, this (as it makes such persons low, and cheape, even in the eyes of good men, and reflects upon the whole Ministry in the eyes of the world; so also this renders the labours of many, fruitlesse and insuccessfull; it being a just, and righteous thing with God to leave

such to themselves and their carnall ends.

And as to those persons who have beene long in *Universties*, and are not fit for any publique employment either in Church or *Common-wealth*, having mispent their time, and improved in nothing but in Corruptions; these ought to be cast out, as *unfavoury sale*, or removed as *unprofitable, unfruitfull trees*, out of the *Nursery* that so there may be room for other hopefull young plants to grow, and thrive in their places, to be *profitable Instruments* in their generation, And if *Governours* have not sufficient authority to send forth the one, or to cast out the other, they ought to obtaine it, where it may be had: Otherwise the *great and maine end of Universties* can never be attained, neither can *Governours* who neglect to doe this, be able to make a good accompt unto God in this matter, which will shortly be required of them: Give an accompt of thy *stewardship*, for thou maist be no longer steward.

The seventeenth Observation in Nature.

Fruit-trees never loose their innate or naturall properties, but they abide in the Trees, as long as the trees live: They may (and sometimes do) loose all adventitious properties such as they have by the *Art*, and *industrie* of men, but they neuer loose their *Naturall*; All the skill, and power of men, cannot rob the Trees of their *Naturall properties* without the destruction of the Trees.

This is another *Similitude* of the state of *Mysticall fruit-trees* and shadowes forth unto us this *Proposition*. That.

Saving grace, or the *Divine Nature* in believers, abides in the soule for ever, but common Gifts, or Graces may be lost. *Proposition shadowed.*

When God gives any soule to Christ there is then a *Marriage* between Christ and that soule: Now the *Bonds and Lawes* of *Marriage*, hold and are in force, so long as the parties live.

The *Covenant* between God and his people is a *well ordered covenant*, sure, and stedfast, 2 Sam. 23. 5.

Grace in Believers, is a *spirituall nature*, or the *Divine Nature*: And if that all naturall living Creatures retaine their *Naturall vertues, and properties*, so long as they live, how much more shall the soule, (which is a spirituall substance) hold and keep those *spirituall Naturall properties, habits and inclinations*, that God fixeth in it.

Holi.

Holineſſe, is a *Divine Nature*, or new Creature which God puts into the Soules of Beleivers, and in respect of duration) is like unto the *Author* of it, who is *Eternall*.

We are kept by the power of God, through faith, 1 Pet. 1. 5. And as God is the *Author* of faith, so also he is the *perfector* of it, *Heb. 12. 2.*

All the *Attributes* of God, are engaged for our perseverance in grace; he is faithfull, who also will do it, *1 Thesl. 5. 23, 24.*

I will put my feare (this new Nature) into their hearts, and they shall never depart from me, Jer. 32. 40. they shall never loose it, neither shall their enemies take it from them, either with power, or policy, it is impossible. *Mark. 24. 24.* If it were possible they shall deceive the very *Elect*, implying, it is not possible.

Multitudes of other *Scriptures* might be brought to this purpose; but I study brevity throughout all the worke.

But now: such as have but *Common Spirituall Gifts* may, and do fall away; These make a Profession for a time (for some selfe, and sinister ends) and after a while fall off, and come to nothing.

They are as a *Bough stuck in the ground Without Roots*, that for a while in the pleasant spring, will bud and Blossome, like other boughes, (upon living Trees) but in the heate of sommer, it withers and dies; see *Observ. 9.*

Many have excellent *naturall parts*, in respect of their apprehension, understanding, *Memory*, utterance &c. *Much Learning*, skill, and acquired abilities, and may be able to *Preach*, *Pray*, *discourse* &c. much better, then many of Gods people, they may be enlightened, and tast of the heavenly Gift, they may receive the word of God with some liking of it, and in some things conform unto it; And yet (by degrees) may loose all, or most of these things; for all these, if no more, come short of true grace, or holineſſe, they are common to the *Reprobate*, as well as to the *Elect*. They went out from us, because they were not of us. *1. Joh. 2. 19.* such are as the *stonie ground*, *Matth. 13. 21.* the seed springs, and dies soone after.

1 Use.

These things being so, it highly concernes all Professours to looke well to their *Principles*, what they have received, whether true, and saving graces, or but only *Common Gifts*, and *Graces*, lest with the *feolish Virgins*, that had Lamps but no Oyle, they be shut out of heaven, when they expect to enter in.

Hence

Hence we may see the folly, and weaknesse of those who labour more for *spirituall gifts*, then for *saving graces*; some men ^{2Vse} bestow more *cost, time, and labour*, for *accomplishments in humane Learning, and Morall abilities*, which may be all *lost*, then they doe for the *Wisdom of God, and his Image*, which abide in the soule for ever. Is not this *Esau* like, who preferred a *Messe of Pottage*, before a *blessing*?

How shall any be able to excuse such men from grosse *spirituall folly, blindnesse and want of Judgment*, who preferre things where *Sathan* excells them, before those things which make men resemble *God*?

Surely, there is no clearer Evidence of darknesse of mind, then for men to labour more earnestly for *Gifts* than for *Graces*, for things that perish, then for *Eternall Treasures*.

The nineteenth Observation in Nature.

THe husbandman hath use for many *Tooles, and Instruments*, about his works in his *Garden of Fruit-trees*; and if any of them grow *dull, and unserviceable* for which ends they were appointed, if his *knives, sawes &c.* (after often whetting, and filing) will not cut, but become *blunt, and dull tooles*, he layes them aside (or perhaps sometimes in displeasure, throwes them aside) and makes use of some other *Instruments* that have an edge: He very much approves of *sharp Tooles* about his works.

This shadowes out unto us. That,

God is well pleased with *zealous, and active Instruments* in his works; *Proposition*
But men of *dull, indifferent spirits*, he (often) layes them aside, and puts shadowed.
others in their stead.

God the Great *Misticall husbandman* hath great works in hand in his *Garden the Church*: *Joh. 5. 17. My father worketh hitherto, and I worke*: And though he can doe all his works with a word of his Mouth, yet he is pleased to make use of many *Instruments*, in carrying them on.

Now God doth very much approve of *Zealous, and active instruments* in the works he sets them about;) their zeale being
gui-

guided with wisdom, and Judgment) *Jehu*, because he was *Zealous and active* for God in destroying *Ahabs house*, God established him, and his posterity, in the Throne, unto the fourth generation; But *Saul*, an eminent Instrument (and set up by God himselfe) yet neglecting to doe the Lords work thoroughly, (which was in his power to doe) God laid him aside in displeasure, and set up *David* (a *zealous and active Instrument*) in his stead, to carry on the works he had to doe.

And *Eli*, (though a good man) and an eminent Instrument in the hand of God, yet when he grew dull, & wanted edg, viz: zeale to suppress the wickednesse of his sonnes, and to honour God in his Office, God was exceedingly displeased with him, and threw him aside (in respect of making use of him any longer) and chose another in his stead. 1 Sam. 3. But how well was God pleased with *Phinebas*, a man of spirit, and zeale for God? God himselfe stands up for him, and commends him; *Phinebas* and his sonnes were established in the Priests Office, Numb. 25. 13. *He shal have it, and his seed after him, even the Covenant of an everlasting Priesthood, because he was zealous for his God.*

God cannot abide indifferency and luke-warmnesse in matters concerning his honour, and the interest of his sonne, which he himselfe is jealous for: a dull, flat, indifferent spirit in these things, is loathsome to God, he cannot beare it, Rev. 3. 16. *Because thou art luke-warm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth.*

Men that act not for God, they act against him, Luk. 11. 23, *He that is not with me is against me.*

Use.

Seeing this is so: It is the safety and wisdom of all men in any place of Power, higher, or subordinate, to lay out themselves with zeale for God, to be diligent and active Instruments in the designs of God: acting according to the directions, and leadings of his Word and Providences.

The advantages will be, not only the honour of God in the enlargement, and establishment of the kingdome of Christ, but also the honour and establishment of such Instruments. God will still delight to imploy them in his great works, Numb. 25. 13.

The nineteenth Observation in Nature.

THe Husbandman in Autumn and Winter, is Pruning of his trees, and boughs and branches are scattered up and downe all the parts of the Orchard. He is then digging up the earth, and baring the Rootes of trees, transplanting some, and setting others in their roomes, and doing many other works which make the Garden lye rough, and unhand somely; But all these works tend to the greater beauty, pleasure, & profit, in the garden afterwards in the spring, and summer.

This Similitude shadowes out unto us this Proposition (which is cleared by Scripture.)

That the Commotions, troubles, and confusions in the Church of Proposition
God, will end in the settlement, peace and glory of it. shadowed.

God hath a great work to doe in the world, and is now about it, even in our daies; He hath said, he will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; That he will shake all nations, and the desire of all Nations shall come, Hag. 2. 6, 7.

When were the Heavens, and the Earth, and the Sea, so shaken as they have been of late yeares? who knowes not of the overturings, and great alterations, that have been among us both in Church and State? It is God that changeth the times, and the seasons, it is he that putteth downe one, and setteth up another, and all these things are but in order unto the glory of his Church: Yea he will still shake, and overturne the Nations untill he hath established, and settled his sonne Christ, Lord and King over all the Earth: This is his great designe now in hand.

Thus saith the Lord God, remove the Diadem, and take off the Crowne, this shall not be the same, exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high, Ezek. 21. 26.

I will overturne, overturne, overturne it, and it shall be no more, untill he come whose right it is, I will give it him.

Christ alone hath right to raigne, and God hath promis'd him the Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the Earth for his possession, Psal. 2. 8.

And such as oppose him, and stand out in rebellion against him (though they be Kings and Monarch's) and say we will not have

this man to raigne over us, he will *break such with a rod of Iron, and dash them in peeces like a Potters vessell*, Psal. 2. 9.

Christ now meets with opposition in coming to enter upon his kingdome, and thence are all the *stirres, commotions, and confusions* among us; but he will at length prevaile, and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and of the increase of his government, and peace, there shall be no end, the zeale of the Lord of hosts will performe this; Esay. 9. 7.

His Kingdome shall at length be *established upon the tops of the Mountaines, and be exalted above the hills*, Mica: 4. 1. And after he hath rebuked the strong nations of the earth, and brought them into subjection, *Then they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their speares into Pruning hooks, and shall learne war no more, but they shall sit every man under his Vine, and under his Fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it*. Mica. 4. 3, 4. and againe, Esay. 32. 18. *My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.*

1 Use. Let all take notice of the great designe that God hath in hand, in the enlargement of the kingdome of his sonne, and establishing him in it, and beware they be not found fighteis against God. And though men contrive, and bend their strength against God, yet will he carry on his work, and they shall be broken, Esay. 8. 9. *Associate your selves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in peeces, Gird your selves, and ye shall be broken in peeces.*

2 Use. This truth is full of Consolations to the Church of God, which hath been long oppressed and kept under by the enemies thereof. For surely the time of deliverance is neere.

As by the budding and blossoming of the Fig-tree, and all other Trees, we know that the Sommer is neere: so the terrible shaking of the Nations declare that the redemption of Gods people drawes neere (these being the last daies) The day of the Churches deliverance (from under the power of Antichrist) hath dawned, Esay. 60. 1. *Arise, and shine, for the light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Whereas thou hast been forsaken, and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternall excellency, a joy of many Generations*: Vers. 15. 20. *The Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the daies of thy mourning shall be ended.*

The

The twentieth Observation in Nature.

THe graft and stock of the fruit-tree, are so joyned together, as that they are the one within the other, and so made one intire body. The Graft is within the Stock, in respect of its substance (the stock incloseth some part of it) And the Stock is within the Graft, by its sap, and moisture giving nourishment to it, whereby it thrives and brings forth good fruits: So they being joyned, and one within the other, are made one body or substance.

This Similitude shadowes out unto us. That Proposition
Believers by ingrafting into Christ, doe live in him, and he in them, shadowed,
and are thereby made one with him.

This truth is clearely held forth unto us in Scripture; It is a great Myſtery, not understood, or comprehended by any naturall man, and better understood (in our own spirits by experience) than expressed to others. The Apostle saies 2 Cor. 4. 16. *Ye are the Temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walke in them.* And 1 Joh. 4. 16. *He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* Believers dwell in God the father, and in Christ, and in the spirit; and God, and Christ, and the spirit dwell in them. As the spirit is in Believers, so they are in the spirit, Gal. 5. 25. *If we live in the spirit, let us also walke in the spirit.* Gal. 2. 20. *I live yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*

And now; by this spirituall or mysticall union between God and 2 Cor. 13. 5.
his people, they are made one with God: Not to be understood as some have said, That every believer hereby is God, and so advance themselves above what is meet. It is true believers are made one with Christ, 1 Cor. 6. 17. *He that is joyned to the Lord is one spirit,* and Ephes. 4. 4. *There is one body, and one spirit.*

And it is the prayer of our Lord Christ (which is certainly heard) that his people, with his father, and himselfe may be one. Joh. 17. 21. *That they all may be one, as thou father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.* v. 22. *And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are*

one, 23. *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.*

What a wonderfull *mystery* is this, that Believers should be united to, and made *one with God*, as the *Father*, and the *Sonne* are one? Not in respect of partaking of his *essentiall and incommunicable properties* which Creatures are incapable of, but in respect of *reality and truth*: Believers are as truly, and really joyned, and united to Christ as the Branches of a Tree are unto the root.

As the Stock and the Graft are really joyned together, and are one within the other, and made one body, so are Believers really united to God, God dwelling in them, and they in God, and are made one spirit with him through Christ, 1 Cor. 6. 17. *He that is joyned to the Lord is one spirit.* And againe, 1 Cor. 12. 13. *By one spirit we are united, &c.*

1 Vse.

Seeing Believers live in God, and God in them, and that they are made one with him. This shewes us their safe Condition, notwithstanding the malice, and power of all their enemies. They shall never be able to prevaile against Gods people, or to hurt them. As the hills are about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about his people: Psal. 125. 2. *The Mercy, the wisdom, power, love, and faithfulnessse of God compasseth them about, for they live in God.* This is the Hedge that was about Job: Chap. 1. 10. *Thou hast made an hedg about him, and about all that he hath: so that Sathan could not touch him without leave.*

2 Vse.

2. From hence we may gather: That believers shall be sure to persevere in grace unto the end: for they live in God, and from him they receive all supplies of grace. Seeing Christ is risen up, and dies no more, believers, that are in him as really as the graft in the stock, they shall be fed, and nourished by him continually, as the stock feeds, and nourishes the Graft: the Roote is never dry, but still gives sap to the branches, both in winter, and sommer: so Christ is the true, and living Vine, the Roote and stock filled with all the fulnesse of God, out of which we all receive grace, for grace, and are nourished with this living Sap unto Eternall life. Job. 4. 14. *Springing up unto Eternall life.*

3 Vse.

This Union, and Onenessse between us, and God the father, and Christ should make us live a *holty*, and a *Gospell Conversation*, such as becomes our Relation. Seeing these things are so, what manner of

of persons ought we to be in all holy Conversation? Let us therefore strive to be holy, as God is holy, and perfect, as our heavenly father is perfect. Seeing that we are so neere to God, and *live in God*, we may by eying, and beholding of him, be more, and more changed into his *Image, and likenesse*, from one degree of glory to another, 1 Cor. 3. 18. and so be more, and more partakers of his *divine Nature*: and thereby dayly have more *Communion, and fellowship* with him (as two friends being for the most part together, are intimately acquainted, and familiar with each other) This is the *top Priviledg* of beleivers on this side heaven; we should therefore bring forth fruit answerable to the *spirit*, and *sap* that we receive from *Christ our stock*, and *Roote*, whereon we grow, into which we are implanted.

The twenty first Observation in Nature.

Fruit-trees of the same species, or kind, are all like one another; They resemble one another in their *Natures*, and in their *Shape, Colour, Leaves, Buds, Blossomes, and fruits*; So that they are clearly differenced hereby from other kinds: men know them to be such, or such kinds of trees, and of one kind, by their *likenesse* one to another.

Hence we learne. That

All Believers have a *likenesse, and resemblance* of one another in the *Proposition Image of God upon their soules*. shadowed.

The Image of God is the same upon all believers, and differs not, but only in the degrees of it, upon some it is more beautifull, and glorious, then upon others, yet the same in respect of the *qualities, and Nature of it*. All have a love, and liking of all the *objects of love*, as they are discovered, and made manifest: And also there is in the *soules* of all believers, an hatred, or dislike of what is contrary to God, and to that *spirituall or divine Nature* in them, as the spirit of God discovers *such objects* to their *understandings*. And the Cause of all Controversies, and difference in Judgment amongst Gods people, is not from any difference in their *spirituall nature*, for that is the same in all, but from *different degrees of*

light, and manifestations in particular things: some are more renewed, and changed in the spirit of their minds and have more of the Image of God, and are more purged from Corruptions then others, and thence it is that all cannot comprehend things alike, yet is their a likenesse, and resemblance in their Natures, there are the same actings, and movings of soules, the likenings, and lustings after holy and spirituall things (in some measure or degree) in one, as in another: in weake, as in strong Christians: A Child hath the same Members, and is of the same Nature, as a man at full growth; So the Spirituall Man.

God hath promised to put this likenesse upon his people Jer. 32. 39. *I will give them one heart, and one way.* God will make all of them hate the same things: *all the detestable things where they come,* Ezek. 11. vers. 19. *I will give them one heart: The Multitude of them that believed, were of one heart, and of one soule.* Acts: 4. 32.

1 Use.

Here we have a true Touchstone of an honest heart; such as have a reall love, and liking of spirituall things, Those whose hearts secretly close with the people of God, because they are his, and heartily joyne with them in their most spirituall, holy walkings, disliking, and opposing (from a Principle within) things that hinder the worke of grace, and kingdome of Christ, they may certainly conclude, they are of the Elect of God, because they are like, and of the same stamp with the rest of his people.

2 Use.

This is a strong Cord to draw, and tye fast together all the Children of God, They are like, and resemble one another, are of one and the same nature, properties, and dispositions, also they have all one God, one father, one saviour, one spirit, one and the same portion, and inheritance, Likenesse, and resemblance (in Naturall, Morall, and spirituall things) is a ground of Love, and Union.

The two and twentieth Observation in Nature.

THe Husbandman prepares (in his Nursery such wild Plants as he intends to bring, and plant in his Garden: He plants none in his Orchard, or Garden (where they are to grow a long time) but such as
are

are first ingrafted, prepared and growen fit for that purpose in the Nursery.

This shadowes out unto us: That

Those whom God purposeth to bring (hereafter) into his Celestiall Paradise, he prepareth them for it here, in this shadowed life.

The Whole Earth is Gods great Nursery, where he hath Plants growing of all sorts, and ages, some newly sprung up, wild, and unmanured, others well growen, Engrasted, and prepared, for the heavenly Canaan, whom he is daily removing, and transplanting thither: preparation for this Garden of God, is absolutely necessary. Now ther's no preparation of wild Plants for a Garden, without Engrasting; all the Culture, pruning, dressing, or ordering the husbandman can use, is to no purpose, without Engrasting, either of Naturall, or spiritnall plants, Jo. 3. 3. Except a man be borne againe, he cannot see the kingdome of God. As to the wild Naturall Plants there is a new Nature added by Engrasting, so there is also a new Nature, the divine Nature, put into the soule, by Regeneration, or Ingrasting into Christ, without which there can be no preparation for glory.

The Apostle speaking of the glory above (and that the saints groan earnestly for it,) saies, God fits them and prepares them for this state of glory: 2 Cor. 5. 5. He that hath wrought us for the selfe same thing is God God squares, and works these spirituall, lively stones, for the spirituall building, as a Mason hewes, and squares the stones he intends for a Materiall building. Or (to keepe to the similitude in hand) the husbandman prepares the Plants he intends to Plant in his Garden, ere he remove them thither. Col. 1. 12. Giving thanks to the father who hath made us meete to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

As there are vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, so also, there are vessels of mercy prepared unto glory. Rom. 9. 23. This people have I formed for my selfe: they shall shew forth my praise Eley. 43. 21. There is an absolute necessity of this preparation, because (might it be supposed as a thing possible, that a naturall man should come to heaven, it would be but even a burthen to him; he would have no joy, no rest, nor contentment there; for all things there

there are contrary to his Nature: now nothing pleaseth, but things that are according to our Nature: therefore God prepareth his people, by giving them another Nature, the *divine Nature*, which is sanctification, or holinesse.

God fits, and prepares his people for glory, by Convincing them of their state and condition by Nature, shewing them a way, and meanes of getting out of it, even by laying hold on Christ by faith, closing with him upon the tearmes of the Gospell, The Spirit of God unites them unto, and (by faith) ingrafts them into that *fruitfull living stock* *Iesus Christ*, without which none can be prepared unto glory. And after this *Ingrafting*, the Husbandman goes on to prepare his Plants, by Pruning, dressing, and ordering of them, by meanes of *Ordinances*, *Afflictions*, *Temptations*, *dispensations of providence*, and workings of his spirit in all these; whereby he brings them to further degrees of *Sanctification*, untill they have attained their measure, and are fitted for glory.

Use.

Let all that have an expectation of the glory that is to be revealed, consider well this poynt, it is as possible (and as likely) the *Carpenter* should take Trees newly cut downe, rough, and unsquared (boughes and all) and put them into a Building, as that God should bring soules to glory (the body being cut downe) which he hath not fitted, and prepared for glory: Therefore if thou canst not (upon some good grounds) satisfie thy selfe that God is in a way of preparation with thee, let not thine eyes sleepe, neither the Temples of thine head take any rest, untill thou finde some good evidences of this thing. And let such as finde, and

a This is a cleare evidence our Names are know, they are prepared for glory (by Engrafting into Christ, Calling, Sanctification &c. Rejoyce in the Lord alwaies, because their Names are written in heaven, they being prepared for it, shall certainly be brought unto it) measure.

The three and twentieth Observation in Nature.

Naturall Fruit-trees increase by little and little every yeare, they are not suddenly great, and large trees, but they increase by degrees, every yeare they grow bigger, and larger every way, by the culture and diligence of the husbandman, and influences of heaven, untill they attaine their full growth.

This shadowes out unto us the state of Spirituall Fruit-trees, in this Proposition.

That grace in the hearts of Believers is not suddenly strong, but *Proposition shadowed.*
strength is gotten by degrees.

Grace is compar'd to a Grain of Mustardseede, which though it be very small, yet by degrees it groweth very great *Mark. 4. 31.* It is like a Graine of Mustardseed, which when it is sown in the Earth, is lesse then all the seeds that be in the earth, *vers. 32.* but when it is sown it groweth up, and becometh greater then all herbs, and shooteth out great Branches &c.

The inclinations, and new dispositions which the spirit of God beginneth to worke in the soule, they are then but very weake, and slender, scarce (it may be) to be perceived, but afterwards they are more sensible; it is as Corne sowed in the field (our Saviour holds it forth by that *Similitude Mark. 4. 28*) which bringeth forth, first the blade, then the Eare, after that the full corne in the Eare. Corne (wee know) springs up at first very small and slender, and scarcely to be distinguished from Grasse; so the first Springings of Grace in some are so small, that they are scarce to be perceived, nor are they easily distinguished from *Morall vertues.*

The word of God is compar'd to seede, *Luk 8. 11. the seed is the word, &c.* Now the spirit of God, being the efficient Cause, or worker, As the husbandman casteth seede into his ground which he has prepar'd for that purpose, so does the spirit cast, or put the word into the heart, he causeth it to fasten, to take hold, and to make impression in the heart and conscience of believers, and there he waters it, and causeth it to grow, he makes it take effect, and to worke according to the Nature of the word.

And of this seede the *New man* is borne, *1 Pet. 1. 23.* being borne againe, not of corruptible seede, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, &c.

A Child newly borne, is not presently a Man, but he growes up by little, and little; God hath *Children, young men, and fathers* in his great family the Church, believers of severall ages, some weake, and some strong.

1 Use.

This being so, then the sower, harsh doctrine that some men often dispence, without due ingredients, or distinctions, is not according to wisdom, laying loads, and burthens upon weake shoulders, and giving strong meate to *Babes*; defining *faith* to be a full perswasion of the love of God, which is onely applicable to some strong, well growne Christians, and not to the weake: In the discoverie of the *Characters of Grace*, such are often held forth, as whereto none attaine but the elder, and stronger sort of Believers, which are stumbling blocks, and grounds of Temptations, and doubts to the weaker. Paul should be made a Patterne in this case: *1 Cor. 3. 2. I have fed you with milke, and not with meate, for hitherto ye were not able to beare it.*

2 Use.

Let not any soule be discouraged though Graces are weake at present, they will grow stronger and stronger, in the diligent use of all good meanes, though thou seemest to be even overturned by Sathans Temptations, and thy owne Corruptions frequently, yet carry this in thy Mind: *I shall be stronger.* And be sure to eye Christ all along, having once got a sight of him, though thy sight be but weake, and dim, yet take heed of loosing it, and strength will come from Christ: often acting of faith upon Christ, will increase and strengthen the Principle, or habit of faith. Though thou art not able to lay fast hold upon Christ with the hand of faith, yet if thou canst but touch him, as it were, but with the little finger of faith, vertue will come from him, to refresh thy soule. Daily study the Promises of the New-Covenant, and ye may draw Milke out of those Breasts of Consolation, which will feede, and strengthen all the Graces. *1 Pet. 2. 2. As new borne Babes, desire the sincere milke of the word, that ye may grow thereby.*

But

But some soules Object against themselves that they doe not grow, after long use of the meanes, they find little, or no growth in Grace: It may be Answered, sure thou art mistaken; for those who often complaine of the want of *growth*, which is their greife and burthen, certainly such soules doe grow. Their clearer sence, and sight of Corruptions, with bewailing of them, is a plaine *Evidence of growth*: compare what thou findest now, with what hath beene aforesaid, and it will be more visible. *Fruit trees*, nor *Branches* cannot be seene to grow, yet compare their *breadth*, and *bignesse* now, with what they were aforesaid, and their growth will be manifest.

The foure and twentieth Observation in Nature.

WE see by *Experience*, that *Grafts* do sooner, and more generally, take hold of the stocke, receive sap, and life from it, in a mild spring, when there is calme warme weather, gentle showers, and now and then some warme gleames of the sunne, then they do in a cold spring, when there are many Frosts, dry, harsh, East winds; such a season keeps back most *Grafts*, and hinders their springing, and shooting forth, as they would do in calme weather.

This is another *Similitude* &c. and shadoves out unto us this *Proposition*: That

Discoveries of the Love of God to soules prepared for Christ, does hasten their closing with him.

When a soule lies under convictions for sin, and apprehensions of the wrath of God for it, the great thing is then, how to make such a soule to close with, and lay hold on *Christ*, whereby onely he shall have true peace, and so proceede unto growth, and bearing fruits. Now if such a one live under a harsh *Ministry* where the Law is frequently thundred out against sinners, with little mixture of the Gospell, or if he meete with passages in bookes, which naturally beget feares, or converse with unskillfull friends, who (through ignorance of such a condition) will be apt to censure (as *Jobs* friends) & lay on more load upon his spirit, such a one hereby may be kept a great while from closing with *Christ*; and

resting on him by faith: Whereas cleare discoveries of the kindnesse and love of God, in Christ, of readinesse to receive, and bid welcome such a one, is the most likely meanes, to bring the soule to *close with Christ*. When the 3000 were pricked in their hearts at *Peters Sermon Acts 2.* the *Apostle* encourages them with good words, and assurance of entertainment, and acceptance, and thereupon they *believe and rest on Christ*: So when the *Jayler* was struck with terrors, *Paul* immediately encourages him to beleive, and he forthwith *closeth with Christ, Acts 16.31.* When a soule is wounded and bruised with the sight of sin, and apprehensions of wrath, then the *soft Oyle*, or *Balme of the Gospell* should be powred in, *Esay. 35. 4.* Say to them that are of a fearefull heart, be strong, feare not, behold your God will come with a *Recompence*, he will come and save you. This is the very Office of Christ, and his Ministers. *Esay. 61. 1.* To preach glad tidings to the Mecke, to bind up the Broken hearted, to proclaime liberty to the Captives, and the opening of the Prison to them that are bound, to proclaime the acceptable yeare of the Lord, to comfort all that mourne &c. Now the reason hereof is, because soules lying under apprehensions of wrath for sin, their doubt is mainly of Gods willingnesse to save them, they know not his *Will* in the thing, therefore to labour to convince them of his Love, of his willingnesse, and readinesse to receive, and save sinners that come to him by Christ, is the great businesse in case of distresse and doubting.

I Vse.

This being so, then those who goe about to direct, and comfort weary soules laden, and burthened with the sense of sin and wrath, are to beware how they presse the duties of the Law to such in order to settlement and peace; some are ready still (in such Cases) to tell the partie distressed in conscience, you must walke strictly, take heed of Sin, give not way to corruptions, not so much as any motions or stirrings of them within, and be diligent in all duties of hearing the word, reading, meditation &c. and so put them on the duties of the Law, or Covenant of workes, whereby to get peace, and acceptance with God, making God appeare as a hard Master, and thereby lay one burthen upon another, in stead of easing of them; Whereas the sweete refreshing Promises of the Covenant of grace, the infinite Love of God in our pretious Lord *Jesus Christ*, should be laid open, and held forth clearely to such a weary soule; that

that such a one might see the great workes of *fulfilling the Law, and satisfying divine Justice*, done to his hand, in case he lay hold upon and, *close with Christ by faith*; This is the ready way to settle such a soule, to make the Graft take hold of the stock, from which it may receive life.

This the Apostle shewes us by a plaine instance, *Gal. 3. 2. Received ye the spirit by the worke of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?* as if he should say, ye know this course was taken with you, before ye beleived: The doctrine of *free grace* was preached to you, ye heard that *Justification* came not by the workes of the Law, but by *faith in Christ*; even so it is now.

Secondly, Soules thus in distresse ought to harken to, and receive offers of grace when they heare them made, and not to put them off, and neglect them, as very many doe. They will not, or dare not close with the free promises of grace, because say they, I wretch am not worthie, I am not fitted, my heart is hard, my Corruptions are strong, I am full of sin, my whole life is nothing but sin: Why thou shalt never have it otherwise, so long as thou standest off, and refusest to *close with Christ*. If thou think to get thy heart into an humble, melting frame, and temper, and to subdue Corruptions, and then to close with Christ, thou wilt but deceive thy selfe, that's not the way; but seeing thy want of Christ and thy sinfull undone condition without him, and a true desire in thee to get out of it, and to be sanctified as well as justified, to be saved from sin, as well as wrath: let it be the very first thing thou doest to venture on him, and *close with him*, accept of his love, and doe but touch him by faith, and thou shalt find thy selfe healed of all thy spirituall diseases, but without this course (notwithstanding all thy owne strictnesse, and endeavours in duties) thou wilt find thy selfe to be worse and worse.

2 V^{se}.

The five and twentieth Observation in Nature.

THe Husbandman having laboured, and taken much paines about Engrafting his Plants, When (in the spring) he sees they begin to bud, and shoo forth, When he (observing of them) perceives they have

have closed with and taken hold of the stock, he is glad of it, this is a ground of rejoycing to him, he is very well pleas'd to see the good successe of his labours about his Fruit-trees.

This discovers to us: That

A sinners Repentance, and closing with Christ, causeth joy both in heaven and Earth.

The Lord, the great husbandman is alwaies at worke, labouring to draw soules to Christ, by all waies and meanes; And his *sub-husbandmen the Ministers of the Gospell*, and all his people (one way or other) do labour in the same worke, they are *Co-workers, fellow labourers* with him in this great Gospell worke: Now when they see their works and labours have good successe, they rejoyce, and are glad.

1. The people of God rejoyce when they see unregenerate persons come in to Christ, because they are renewed themselves, and it's naturall for every Creature to be glad of, and rejoyce in its like. Secondly; they rejoyce at the conversion of others, because they love God, and Love is alwaies glad at that which pleaseth, and makes for the beloved: God hath honour hereby, and therefore they rejoyce.

The Reason,

Secondly, the faithfull Ministers of the Gospell rejoyce at the conversion of soules, not only upon these accompts, but also because they are more immediately concerned in it, it is their proper worke and businesse, to winne soules to Christ: Now when they see the successe of their Labours they say as the Apostle, 3 Epistle of John 4. *I have no greater joy then to heare that my Children walke in the truth.*

So the Apostle Paul, 1 Thes. 2. 19. *what is our hope, our joy, our Crowne of rejoycing, are not yee &c?* v. 20. *For ye are our glory & joy.* Thirdly: The good Angels also rejoyce when sinners turne to God: This our Saviour tells us: Luk. 15. 7. *I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth &c.* vers. 10. *There is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.*

Fourthly, God the father, sonne, and spirit rejoyce at the Repentance of sinners. The spirit (to speake after the manner of men)

is said to be greived with sin, when soules reject his motions, so on the contrary when they hearken to him, he is well pleased. Our Saviour having taught his disciples, and brought them to understand, and receive the things of the kingdome of God he rejoyced, *Luk. 10. 21. In that houre Jesus rejoyced in Spirit &c.* Also we see how God the Father is wel pleased when sinners come in to Christ, this is at large made out unto us in the Parable of the Prodigall, *Luk. 15. 20.* the father seeing his sonne returning to him, how glad is he of it, he ran to meete him, and fell on his neck and kissed him; then there was Musicke, and dancing and feasting, &c. all this is but to let us know how welcome a soule is to God when it returns from its wandrings: *Esay. 65. 19. I will rejoyce in Jerusalem, and joy in my people, and Zeph. 3. 17. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty: he will save, he will rejoyce over thee with joy; hee will rest in his Love, he will joy over thee with singing.*

I Use.

O what encouragement is here unto sinners to come in, and close with Christ by faith! they shall be welcome, freely welcome, & not onely so, but heaven & earth will (as it were) ring with joy at their coming in: It will not be onely matter of joy unspeakable and full of glory unto themselves, but also it will be joy to others: *Men and Angels*, yea the blessed God himselfe (speaking to our apprehensions) is said to rejoyce at it. Now therefore be wise in this thy day, stand not out one Moment longer; wilt thou not accept of a Crowne and kingdome when it is offered thus freely? if thou wilt not, then know for a certainty, that God who now tels thee he will be glad of thy coming in) will laugh at thy destruction, and mocke when thy feare comes. *Pro. 1. 26.*

Secondly: Let all the people of God labour in this glorious worke of winning soules to Christ, that so Jerusalem (the Church of God) may not only be a quiet habitation, but also filled with joy, when the redeemed of the Lord shall returne, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads, they shall obtaine joy, and gladnesse, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. *Esay 35. 10.*

This is a Touchstone for those who professe, and pretend an interest in Christ: dost thou rejoyce when thou seest or hearest of any comming in to Christ, that the kingdome of Christ is daily growing,

2 Use.

3 Use.

growing, and increasing in the addition of Members to his Church? Does it refresh thy spirit to see and heare that holinesse, and the power of godlinesse gets rooting in the hearts of many in the world, that Jesus Christ is received, and multitudes close with him? why then this is a sound and sure evidence and ground that thine heart is upright with God, that thou hast an interest in Christ, and art thy selfe ingrafted into him.

But if it be an indifferent thing to thee what others doe in this respect, whether they come in or no; if they doe not, thou art not moved, it grieves thee not to see men reject Christ freely tendred in the Gospell, nor if they receive him, and close with him, neither art thou glad of it, thou doest not rejoyce in it. If the habituall frame, and temper of thy spirit be thus, I dare boldly affirme it, thou hast not closed with Christ thy selfe as yet; thou art not yet ingrafted into him, therefore consider thy waies, and make hast to get into Christ, delay not a moment longer.

The six and twentieth Observation in Nature.

(a) Inanimate
Creatures are
said to rejoyce,
when they per-
forme Naturall
Acts vigorously.
The sun reioy-
ceth to run his
course. Ps. 15. 5. The
hills, and Val-
leys (when abun-
dantly fruitfull)
hey laugh and
sing, Pl. 65. 13.
Proposition
shadowed.

AS the Husbandman takes pleasure in his fruit-trees, so they (a) (in a sence) take pleasure in him: He delights to walke among them, & converse with them, by meditation; searching out their Natures, and vertues, for Profits, and advantages, he takes pleasure in their shade, (in heate of summer) and in their wholsome fruits in their seasons: And the fruit-trees also may be said to take pleasure in the husbandmans watering, dressing, and manuring; discovered by their increase, strong, and vigorous shootes, pleasant Blossomes, and multiudes of fruits from yeare to yeare.

This is another Similitude &c. and shadowes out unto us this Proposition. That

There is a sweete fellowship, & communion betweene God, & his People, God delights in them, and they delight in him.

Believers stand in the neereest Relations to God that can be, As a peculiar people unto God 1 Pet. 2. 9. As childrento a father, Rom. 8. 17. As freinds to God the father, and Christ, Iames 2. 23. Iohn 20. 17.

As

As Branches to the roote, or stock: as brethren to Christ, as heires and coheires with Christ: As a wife to the husband; as members to the head, 2 Cor. 6. 17. 10. 15. 14. Cant. 4. 17. Eph. 3. 20. In all which there is a wonderfull union, and neerenesse set forth betwene God and his people, wherein there is *delight, and Communion.*

The Apostle John speaks this for himselfe, and others, he tels us what their Experiences were in this: 1 John 1. 3. *That which we have seene, and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have Fellowship With us, and truly our Fellowship is with the father, and with his sonne Jesus Christ.* The people of God they walke with God; Now can two walke together, and not have *Communion,* Gen. 5. 22. 6. 9. & *Fellowship* one with another? Surely there are many intercourses, 2 Cro. 7. 17. and sweete passages betwene freinds when they walke together. There are *Questions, & Answers,* resolving of doubts, & Communications of secrets betwene intimate freinds as they walk together. Nay there are not only these *Relations* (mentioned) & a friendly walking together with God, but there is also a *Co-habitation,* or dwelling together with God, yea more; there is an *In-dwelling:* God dwells in his people, & they dwell in him: So that here is a ground of *Communion* indeede: 2 Cor. 6. 16: *I will dwell in them, walke in them:* And Jo 1. 4. 16. *He that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* As the spirit is in believers, so they are in the spirit Gal. 5. 25. Here then must needs be *communion, and fellowship.* From these *Relations,* and neerenesse to, and union with God, springs this *Communion,* which includes *love, joy, and pleasure* on both sides: unspeakable love flowes from God unto his people: yea, God takes *pleasure,* and *rejoyceth* in his people. And they returne Love to God againe, they also take *pleasure, and rejoyce* in God: the scripture is plentiful in these things: Ps. 147. 11. *The Lord taketh pleasure in them that feare him: so againe, Ps. 149. 4. The Lord taketh pleasure in his people: and Zeph. 3. 17. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty, he will save, he will rejoyce over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.* Here is the mighty God taking *pleasure* in his people, *rejoycing* with joy, and *singing, resting* in his love, the believing soule. This joy is not the joy of ordinary freinds, but of those of neere relation, the husband, and the wife, and that (too) at their espousalls: Esay. 62. 5. *As the Bride grome rejoyceth over the Bride, so shall thy God rejoyce over thee.*

Seeing there is such a fellowship between God, and his people, what an invitation, and encouragement is this to all to come into *this Garden the Church of God?* such who weary themselves in seeking for content, and pleasures in the empty things of the world, may come hither, and be satisfied: O say not we shall loose our pleasures if we turne to be precise, and religious, then farewell delights, and joy, then we must imbrace *sadnesse and Melancholy*, instead of our *delights*. O consider how much thou art mistaken that judgest thus: taste and try, and thou wilt find it otherwise. Thy pleasures now out of Christ, are but *shadows of Pleasures*, and there is nothing but *bitternesse* attending them: these are *reall, and substantiall pleasures*, unspeakably more, and better in the measure, and nature of them, and yet they are but *tasts, and beginnings of Eternall joyes and satisfactions*. All the waies, and walkes in this *Communion with God*, are waies of pleasantnesse, and all the pathes are peace, *Prov. 3. 17.*

Here thou maist walke, or sit under the *greate Appletree Jesus Christ*, & be refreshed with his shade, & fruits: Heare what the Church saies & come to her, *Ca. 2. 3. I sate down under his shadow with great delight, & his fruit was sweete to my tast: yea, here is wine to the fruits to make up a compleat Banquet: v. 4. He brought me into a Banqueting house, where are mixed wines, and wine of the Pomegranate, Prov. 9. 2. Cant. 8. 2. If thou delight in feasts, and Banquets here they are: A feast of fat things, of wine on the Lees well refined: Esay. 25 6. And the Master of the feast saies freely, Eat O freinds, drinke, yea drinke abundantly O beloved: Cant. 5. Therefore delay not to come, that thou maist be filled with this joy, in Communion with God.*

2^d Vse.

Will God indeede dwell with men, and have fellowship and Communion with them? Does the holy and blessed God (who cannot have any addition of happinesse by the society of all the Angels in heaven) condescend so low as to have Communion with sinfull man, and to dwell with him, as *Psal. 132. 14.* This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell for I have a delight there: O how should we stand admiring at his free grace and love, And what an Engagement is this unto us to walke humbly, and holily with him?

Let

Let us therefore be diligent to *improve this Communion*, it will be our unspeakable happinesse, and Glory; hereby we are enabled to act for God, with chearefulnesse and life, all duties are easy, and pleasant to us, which when *this* is wanting we carry on but heavily: *This* lifts us up above the reach of Temptations, the flesh is downe, or very much weakned: Sathan is at quiet, in respect of many suggestions which at other times he drives on, and watches his season when he perceives the soule in another frame; being in *Communion* with God, *the world* is then under our feete, the daintiest baits of it, have no tast nor relish with us: Yea the greatest outward Afflictions (which when *Communion* is wanting doe load us, and presse us downe and which break the bark, or the heart of others) these are but light, and are easily borne. By *close Communion with God* we live in another spheare, in another world, then the Common sort of Christians who improve not *Communion*; it lifts Beleivers as it were into the *third heaven*, where are unspeakable pleasures, and contentments, and the soule saies, its good being here; O that I might build, and rest here, and goe no more downe from this Mount: from this Mount the soule takes a view of the holy Land, and sees the beauty, and glory of it, the soule sees it selfe interess'd in the kingdom, and all the riches, and Treasures of it. O the Priviledges that Christ hath purchased for the beleiving soule, they cannot be numbred nor conceived! for God is the great everlasting Portion of his people, and in him are all desirable things, sutable to the soule, which are plainly laid open to the eye of the soule, the spirit sealing an assurance thereof unto it *in this Communion*, which is satisfying and filling more then can be expressed.

Seeing such a *Fellowship* and *communion* may be had with God through Christ, many Christians (reall believers) have reason to take shame unto themselves for that they looke so little after it; It is cleare to the eye of discerning Christians (who know by Experience what this *Communion* is) that some have little *Communion* with God, for their *Communion* is so much, and so hartily with the Creature, that it cannot be also with God; *their speeches, their daily course, and practises, their deadnesse in duties, their cold, and hartlesse acting for God, for the interest of Christ, their*

starven love to the saints, and their eager, and serious pursuite of their owne interests, in things of the World, so highly prising every petty advantage, as that rather then they will part with it, they will let the glory of God, the Gospell, Religion, and all Gods people, suffer blemishes, and disparagement.

These (and such like) things I say, doe too clearely evidence, and prove their *Earthly mindednesse*, and consequently that they are at a distance from God, and enjoy not this *Communion*: For it is as possible that darknesse should abide upon the earth where the sun shines, as that *earthly mindednesse*, and *Communion with God*, should abide together.

The seven and twentieth Observation in Nature.

When the Husbandman hath a plantation in hand, or intends to enlarge his Orchard, he does then remove, and take out of the way whatsoever hinders his worke; all the shrubs, and bushes, wild trees, hedges, stones, Roots, or whatsoever else lies in the way: Hee sets himselfe and his Workmen to cut them downe, roote them up, and remove them, that so he may plant his Fruit-trees, and have a large, and faire Orchard.

This may teach us: That

Proposition
shadowed.

Who, or whatsoever hinders the enlargment of the Church of God, he will certainly (and sometimes with great anger) take out of the way.

The workes and people of God in all ages, have beene opposed by his enemies, and hindred for a time, but God hath ever appeared for his people, and helped them, and carried on his desigies by them, and for them, and the opposers of God, and his people have been brought downe.

When God went about to plant and enlarge his Church the people of *Israell*, how did he cut downe, and destroy their enemies that hindred, and opposed them? When *Kings* and *Princes*, with great *Nations* rose up against them to stop the plantation, these great Mountaines were levelled before them, these tall Ceders, and barren trees were hewen downe on every side; *Pharaoh*, and his
great

great Host, *Sydon* and *Ogg* with their Armies; one and thirty Kings *Josb. 12.* with much people, even as the sand of the sea for multitude, *Iosuah 11. 4.* all fell before *Israell*; If Rivers or Seas hinder their passage, they shall be dried up; Armies of Gyants are cut off, *Luk. 10. 17.* men, and devills are made subject unto them.

Who art thou O great Mountaine before *Zerubbabel*, thou shalt become a plaine, *Zecha. 4. 7.* God will Overturue, Overturue, Overturue *Ezek. 21. 17.* all persons and things that oppose him.

The husbandman will cut downe, and roote up the wild Plants, and trees, with Anger, and great fury, he will come with fire, and sword, as the Prophet speakes *Esay. 66. 14. 15.* The hand of the Lord shall be known among his servants, and his indignation towards his enemies, the Lord will come with fire, and his Charets like a Whirle-wind *vers. 16.* For the Lord will judg with fire, and With his sword all flesh.

Now when shall this be, even when the Lord will enlarge his Church; when he will extend peace to *Ierusalem* as a River, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing streame, *Esay. 66. 12.* When the isles a farre off shall declare his glory among the Gentiles, and brethren shall be brought out of all Nations; When the new heavens, and the new earth shall be made, the Church of God enlarged, and beautified; as we may see at large, *vers. 19. 20. &c.* The Prophet *Jeremiah* speakes likewise to the same purpose, *c. 23. 19. 20.* Behold the tempest of the Lord goeth forth in wrath, & a violent whirle-wind shall fall downe upon the head of the wicked; and the anger of the Lord shall not returne, untill he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart.

Now when these things shall be, we see *vers. 20.* in the latter daies (when God is enlarging his Church) ye shall understand it plainly.

This God will doe, that he may glorifie himselfe in shewing forth his power, and justice towards his enemies, & love to his people.

This may informe us, and give some light unto us, why all the destructions, confusions, and overturnings (which have beene in these Nations of late yeares) have come to passe, and what other Nations shall shortly find also.

The great husbandman is about the enlarging of his Orchard, according to the many Prophecies, and promises in his word;

Now therefore *who, or whatsoever* hinders and stands in the way, shall certainly be removed *2 Thes. 2. 7. The Lord shall consume him (Antichrist) with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming.*

2 Use. As this is unspeakable consolation to the saints (who are the goodly fruit-trees in this large garden) so is the same cause of trembling, and astonishment to all opposers of God in this his great worke: *Weeds and wild Plants in a garden, that's carefully ordered, are not so sure of plucking up, as these persons are of a downfall; for God hath said it: he will plant his Garden, and enlarge it, upon an high mountaine, and eminent, and then up goe the wild trees, though never so high and beautifull, Ezek. 17. 24. Then all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord have brought downe the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the greene tree, and made the dry tree to flourish, I the Lord have spoken it and have done it.*

3 Use. Thirdly: yee that stand out, and oppose the worke of God, be perswaded to deliver your selves from destruction; beware of hardnesse of heart, in refusing to see, and acknowledge the hand of God in his dispensations; for as *Pharaoh, the inhabitants of Egypt, Canaan, and others, were destroy'd in their opposition against the plantation of old; so shall it be with all hardned sinners in these latter daies: Those being but Types, and shadowes of things that shall come to passe in these gospell times: Heb. 10. 1. The law hath a shadow of good things to come, Not only as they shadow forth Jesus Christ, but also the things of Christ in his Church.*

4 Use. And further: Let this Caution *Gods owne people*, It is to manifest, and evident, that even some of them doe in some respects, oppose the worke of God; we see what divisions, and contentions there are amongst them, about the things concerning the kingdome of Christ: Now therefore take heed of opposing the mind of God; for if he be displeased with those who *help not the Lord against the mighty*; will he not be much more displeased, with those that oppose him, and are against him, in any of his *designes*? It may hinder them of much good which otherwise they might have received from God, yea, it may provoke God to cut them off, though *his owne people*: The husbandman sometimes cuts off a Branch, or cuts

cuts downe *even a good tree*, when it is in his way, and hinders any of his *great workes*: so doubtlesse does the Lord with some of his *owne people*, when, through any worldly interest, or corruption, they oppose his designs: Therefore take heede, speake not, neither act against God and his waies through mistakes, be not unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is *Eph. 5. 17.*

The eight and twentieth Observation in Nature,

WHen rare, and excellent fruit-trees, and fruits are first knowne, there being but few of them, they are more valued, and esteemed, then afterwards when they are multiplied, and growen common; though the commodities are still the same in goodnesse, as at first.

This shadowes out unto us, That

The constant enjoyment of the best things from God (through corruptions) makes them lesse noted, and esteemed. Proposition shadowed.

The nature of man is much taken with *new things* which having beene a while used, and enjoyed, are not afterwards of so much value with us, though the things remaine in their former goodnesse, and worth, *health, peace and plenty*, and the *best good things* of this life, yea, the *Ordinances of Christ, society of the saints, seasons and oportunities of grace, spirituall priviledges*, are lesse observed and prized after a long enjoyment of them, then at the first: Though *Manna* was a pleasant bread, Angels foode, and the people of Israel were well pleased with it for a time, yet afterwards they were weary of it *Numb. 21. 5. Our soule loatheth this light bread.*

When the people of God see the necessity and want of good things, and earnestly pray, and waite for them, and at length God satisfies their desires, and gives out the mercy longed for, then they are much taken, and affected with it, their affections are raised, and enlarged, they put a price, and value upon it, greatly rejoycing in it, and blessing God for it; But after a certaine time

time of enjoyment, the heart is lesse upon it, the streames of affections are abated, and run lower, there is not that frequent notice taken of it, neither when the mind reflects upon it (at any time) are the affections stirred, as at the first when the thing was new.

Thus it is even in respect of the best, and choicest things wee receive from God in this life, even the sence, and evidences of the love of God, pardon of sin, interest in Christ, Communion with the father, and the sonne through the spirit; These things after an habituall long enjoyment of them, are lesse noted, and lesse affect the heart, then upon their first discovery, so that God expostulates with his people about it, he takes notice of it, and observes the difference of the frame of their spirits, what it hath beene and what it is afterwards, Jer. 22. *I remember the kindnesse of thy youth, the love of thine espousales &c. when thou wentest after me in the wilderness: time was when we were, first acquainted, and thou didst take me for thy Lord, and Husband, thou didst expresse much love towards me, and wast affected with me, and we walked closely together, but now the case is otherwise: What iniquity have ye found in me that ye are gone farre from me, & have walked after vanity, & are become vaine, as vers. 5. thou hast lost thy first Love, Rev. 2. 4.*

God is sometimes necessitated (as we may say) to take away, and deprive his people of Priviledges, and good things, that so by a sence of the want of them they may be brought to see their unthankfulnesse, and take more notice of them, and prize them more when they are restored.

The experience of Christians make this too evident.

1 Use.

The consideration of this should humble us, and make us greatly ashamed, seeing that many kindneses from God, many acts of his Love will not draw, and fasten our hearts to himselfe, but that they grow cold, and sluggish under the richest enjoyments: Let us often reflect upon it, and loath our selves for this unanswerable frame of spirit towards God, men cannot beare unthankfulnesse, or slighting without withdrawing the manifestations of their love: Now such as cannot out of an ingenuous Principle returne love for love to God, yet let the feare of loosing enjoyments make such persons value and prize them.

2 Use.

Secondly, this hatefull frame of spirit of neglecting, or undervaluing precious things from God, should make us long for the state of glory, when the soule will be in a constant frame of

frame of fervent love to God, and be as much affected with enjoyments after thousands (millions) of yeares, as at the first.

The nine and twentieth Observation in Nature.

ALL the sap and nourishment that the branches of a Tree have, they receive it from the Roote, the boughes and branches have not one jot of sap, but what arises from the Roote, there would not be one Bud, or blossome, or shoote, or lease, or fruit, upon the Tree, if the Roote did not give up sap to nourish, and maintaine them.

This shadowes out unto us, That

Proposition

Our life, growth, strength, and all our spirituall Acts, are from shadowed Christ.

Christ is the Roote, and stock of everie believer, and all spirituall life, and habituall grace is from him: and not only the seede, habits, and principles of grace, but also all the workings and actings of grace are from him, as at first wee were starke dead in finnes and trespasses untill he gave us life, so being quickened by the sonne (who quickneth whom he will) we cannot grow, nor act but by influences from him, 2 Cor. 3.5. *We are not sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God.* A good thought is the least and lowest act of grace, and yet that we cannot doe of our selves, good thoughts, and desires are as Buds or Blossomes upon a tree, which shew themselves before the fruits, Now if trees cannot bud of themselves, how much lesse can they bring forth fruits.

Which also our Saviour plainly tels his disciples, Jo. 15.5. *Without me ye can doe nothing:* Hee doth not say without me ye cannot doe any great thing, but nothing at all. And Hosea 14. 8. *from me is thy fruit found:* The Spirit of Christ is the spring, and Roote of, all our spirituall life, it is the strength, and power of the soule in believers, Acts 1. 8. *Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you.* Paul ascribes his life, and power to Act, all to Christ, Gal. 2.20. *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,*

the life which I now live in the flesh. I live by the faith of the sonne of God. And Phil. 4. 13. I can doe all things (saith he) but it is through Christ that strengtheneth me.

1 Use.

From hence believers (some more especially, of more eminent parts and gifts) may see cause and reason to take shame unto themselves, who having performed any duties, or done any thing according to the mind of Christ, are ready to take the glory to themselves, and thinke too well of themselves. O this is a generall corruption, an accursed thing in the mid'st of us, this secretly workes more or lesse in every heart, but in some is more apparent to themselves and others, although (it may be) these kind of workings of heart declare not themselves plainly, nor arise not up in the soule to cleare, and positive assertions, shewing themselves in their owne colours, and proper natures, yet they may be discerned to be in the heart, by their *fruits, effects, and consequences*, which spirituall eyes discern in themselves, and others.

2 Use.

Let this teach us to have an eye upon Christ in all wee doe, and take heed of going about to act in our owne strength, either in performance of duties, or mortifying Corruptions: Believers generally have recourse to Christ in reference to their *salvation, and deliverance from sin, wrath, and hell*; but doubtlesse there is ignorance of this point in many, and a great neglect in most, in respect of eying Christ, and drawing vertue from him by faith, as to *particular actings* all along in their lives: were we but well instructed in this point, and did but practise accordingly (even to looke unto Christ with the eye of faith, to fetch life, strength, quickning and all things needefull) wee might then *dye more unto sin, and live more unto God*, and might find our selves *strengthened with might in the inner man by his glorious power, even the spirit of Christ: Col. 1. 11. which worketh in his people mightily, vers. 19.*

Acts 1. 8.

3 Use.

Seeing all is from Christ let therefore all be unto Christ: give the glory to him, seeing the life, and power to Act is from him. This is a thing of most speciall concernment, and to be noted by every believer; that as we doe all *in the strength of Christ*, who is the *efficient cause* of all the good we doe, so also, we should doe all *unto Christ, as the finall Cause*, unto whom, and for whom we doe all.

These

These two speciall things the Apostle laies downe in one verse Phil. 1. 11. He prayes that they may abound in love and be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Iesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

It is the property of hypocrites, & temporary believers, to act in their owne strength, Gifts, and parts, and for themselves, their eye is secretly upon themselves: Hos. 10. 1. These are empty Vines: they bring forth fruit to themselves, their fruit is as good as no fruit, because for themselves; but trees of the Lords planting bring forth fruit, that he may be glorified, Esay 61. 3. and Rom. 7. 4. That we should bring forth fruit unto God.

The thirtieth Observation in Nature.

FRUIT-trees that spread much, and grow low, neere the ground, such (most commonly) bring forth more, and larger fruits then high Trees that aspire up into the Aire: some Reasons may be given for it, See Lo. Ba. Nat. Hist.

This shadowes out unto us, That

Humble Christians bring forth farre more, and fairer fruits, then Proposition
such whole spirits are lifted up. shademed.

Lowly Christians are like the lower grounds under hills and neere Rivers, upon which when moisture descends from the heavens, and from the hills, it rests there, and makes the ground fat, and consequently fruitfull.

Who was a more fruitfull Christian than David the holy Prophet? he was so eminently fruitfull, and brought forth so much and so lovely fruits, as that God himselfe commends him, and saies he walked in all the commandments according to his owne heart (one particular excepted) and we see of what a spirit he was in respect of. *humility*, Psal. 131. 1. 2. *My heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty, my soule is even as a weaned Child.*

And the Apostle Paul discovers a spirit of more then ordinary humility, 1 Cor. 15 9. *I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meete to be called an Apostle.* And as though that were not low enough, he descends lower: *I am lesse then the least of all Saints*, Eph. 3. 8. But now, who among the Apostles, or Saints brought forth more.

and greater fruits then this *lowly tree*: In nothing was he behind the very cheife Apostles, 2 Cor. 12. 11. yea: he laboured more abundantly then they all, 1 Cor. 15. 10. and 2 Cor. 11. 23. In labours more abundant.

The Reasons hereof are, first; *humble Christians* have more from God then others; because *neerer God*: they walke with God, and Communicates himselfe to them more then to others, as familiar friends communicate secrets one to another: so God to the *humble soule* that walkes with him, *He giveth grace to the humble*: 1 Pet. 5. 5. *He will teach the humble his way.* Ps. 25. 9. but he resisteth the proud, and is a farre off from him.

Secondly, *Humble soules* are communicative; they make others partake with them of what God hath given them (Children, & every one plucke fruit from a low Tree) and he that watereth shall be watered also himselfe, Prov. 11. 25. the more they give out, the more they have comming in, the more good fruit a Tree brings forth the more will the husbandman doe for it (by way of culture) that it may still bring forth more fruit.

Thirdly, *Humble Christians* are most fruitfull, because they receive profit from all persons, from all things, they can learne something from everie thing, from the meanest, from the worst (whereas *proud persons* thinke they have so much that they'l learne from none) so that their advantages are both from *heaven and earth*, as *materiall trees* growing low, neere the ground have not only the sun and raine, but also some advantage by the reflection of the sunne beames from the earth: which *tall, high Trees* have not:

1 Use.

Let us be much in love with this pretious grace of *humility*, and beware of *pride*: if we would bring forth much and faire fruits; let us labour to be *clothed with humility*: and follow the most glorious Patterne herein Mat. 11. 29. *Learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly in heart*: Then shall wee bring forth much and great fruits, whereby our father, will be glorified, whereof our selves, and others may eat and be filled.

But here we may stand, and take up a lamentation for what we see contrary in many of the people of God in our daies: especially among those who have best parts and abilities, O what shall we doe to pluck up this poysonous destructive Plant, from

from among the good plants of grace.

This has a stronghold even in many of the Saints, and is like that uncleane spirit *Mat. 17. 21.* which goeth not out but by *Prayer* and *fasting*: with great striving, and much adoe.

Consider: is it no Argument against it in that it puts us a farre off from God, in respect of that close communion we might otherwise have with him: and secondly, it almost stifles, and chokes our graces that they cannot act, at they doe in the humble soule. thirdly: it blemishes, and cloudes exceedingly (both in the eye of God, and humble soules) the beauty and honour of Christians in this life, and lessens their future glory, and that for ever.

This is for the honour and praise (as well as for the consolation) *3^{ve}* of *humble saints*; who though they be lowest, perhaps, in outward respects here in the world, yet are they in highest esteeme with God: their *humility exalts them*, even in the accompt of God, and such low spreading Trees, shrubs in their owne eyes, when they are transplanted into the *Garden of God in Paradise*, shall be set upon the *highest ground*, and be the *tallest Trees* there, farre above many of their brethren who in this life are farre above them.

The one and thirtieth Observation in Nature,

THe Roote, body, boughes, branches, and small Twigs of a Tree make but one body, or substance: Though the parts of a Tree are distinguished, and knowne by severall names, and are divided into multitude of boughes, branches, and twigs, yet all of them are so joyned together as that they make up but one body, or substance.

This shadowes out unto us That *Jesus Christ* and his people, (though multitudes of distinct Proposition persons, yet) are so united, as that they make but one shadowed body.

Christ is the head of his Church: and all believers being united to him by faith, are his Members: *1 Cor. 12. 27.* *Ye are Col. 1. 18.*

the body of Christ, and members in particular. Now there is not a more reall union in nature between the head and the Members in the body of a man, or betweene the Roote and branches of a tree, then there is betweene Christ, and his people.

When Christ ascended up on high he gave *Gifts unto men for the perfecting of the saints, the body of Christ, Eph. 4. 12. That they may grow up into him in all things which is the head, even Christ, vers. 15. From whom the whole body fitly joynted together, and compacted, by that which every joynt supplyeth, according to the effectuall working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the Edifying of it selfe in love, vers. 16.*

Christ calls himselfe the *Vine, Joh. 15. 5.* that is the bottome, stock, or Roote of the Vine, and his people are the *Branches*; Now as the *Branches* being joynted, and made one with the Roote doe receive all their nourishment, sap and life from the roote whereupon they increase, and without which they would certainly die and wither, so it is betweene *Christ and his people*; there being a reall, mysticall union and onenesse betweene *this head and this body*, life and nourishment is given from the head to the body, *Col. 2. 19. from which (head) all the body by joynts, and bands, having nourishment ministred, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.*

17^{use}:

This is a ground of unspeakable consolation to believers; for this being so, Christ will certainly take care of them; being joynted to Christ, and one with Christ they shall have *life, nourishment, strength, wisdom, righteousness, holinesse, all good things in this life, out of his fulnesse, and glory hereafter for ever: it cannot be otherwise; for in so doing Christ provides for himselfe, and glorifies himselfe, his Members being one with him.*

27^{use}:

From hence a spirituall eye may see a very great dignity, beauty, and glory put upon Believers (though the meanest.) Union and onenesse with such a glorious person puts a *spirituall glory* upon them. A great Prince marrying a meane person, by that union, an honour is derived upon the party, according to the dignity of the Prince. Now believers are married to Christ, *Jer. 3. 14. and Rom. 7. 4.* and so made one with him, as the husband and the wife are one: so that
what

what dignity and honour is upon the husband, is also, in a proportion, upon the wife.

The two and thirtieth Observation in Nature.

THe Roote of a Tree does continually give up sap, and nourishment to the Boughes and branches all the yeare long; as well in winter to preserve life, as in sommer, to cause growth and increale: But no sap at any time descends from the Branches to the Roote: (though most men, upon mistaken grounds (of this See. pag.) conceive, and affirme, that sap descends in Autumne into the Roote.)

This shadowes out unto us, That

As we have our life, and all from Christ, so we are continually receiving new supplies from him, but can adde nothing to his infinite perfections.

Christ is the Roote, as his people are the Branches, and from this Roote, sap continually ariseth to maintaine life, and cause growth and fruitfulnessse: Jer. 17.8. He shall be as a Tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the River, and shall not see when heate cometh, but her lease shall be greene, and shall not be carefull in the yeare of drought, neither shall cease from yeilding fruit. So. P (at. 1. 3.

And Esay. 58. 11. The Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soule in drought, and make fat thy bones, and thou shalt be like a Watered Garden, whose waters faile not: They shall not hunger, nor thirst, &c. by the springs of water shall he guide them, Esay. 49. 10. As willowes by the water courses, Esay 44. 4.

Here we see are continuall supplies of nourishment to the soul: Rivers (we know) are continually running, and fountaines, or springs are continually springing; these Gardens are watered with waters that faile not, as the Prophet speaks, Esay. 18. 11. Though the body, and branches of a tree were as full of sap as the barke would hold, yet would all be soone exhausted, and spent, and the branches would wither and dye, if there were not a continuall supply from the Roote: So though a man had the habituall grace of

of all beleivers on earth yea of all the *Angels* in heaven (as much as a Creature is capable of) yet could he not thereby persevere, all would be spent without new supplies from *Christ*.

Our Saviour tells us these supplies never faile, but are constant *Joh. 4. 14. Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*

We see then supplies from *Christ* are constant, and continuall which believers draw from him.

By these *Rivers, streames, and springs of water*, are meant the constant supplies the believing soule drawes, and receives from *Christ* by his spirit. As we see: *Joh. 7. 38, 39. He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake he of the spirit. And for the second part of the Proposition: we can adde nothing to his infinite perfections, Iob. 22. 1, 2. Can a man be profitable to God, is it gaine to him that thou makest thy waies perfect: And againe Job. 35. 7. If thou be righteous, what givest thou him, or what receiveth hee of thine hand.*

So the Apostle: *Rom. 11. 35. Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him againe.*

God is no gainer by us: All his Creatures together doing their utmost, can adde nothing to his essentiall glory, which is infinite, and therefore admits of no additions. But we are said to glorifie God, when we manifest, declare, and set forth what he is; when he is made knowne among his Creatures, and worshipped.

1 Use. This shewes us whither to goe for constant supplies of wisdom, strength, quickning, and all Gifts, and graces, even to *Iesus Christ* the store-house, and Treasury of all good things. For it pleased the father that in him should all fulnesse dwell, *Col. 1. 19.* There is something in *Christ*, suteable to all, and evemie of the wants of his people; which they may obtaine of him.

2 Use. This being so, it should make us low in in our owne eyes, and ascribe all the glory to *Christ*, in all the good we have, in all the good we doe: what hast thou, that thou hast not received: *I live* (saith *Paul*) yet not *I*, but *Christ* liveth in me. *Gal. 2. 20.* So *Peter* and *John* having healed the man, put off the honour from

from themselves upon Christ, Acts 3. 12. Why looke ye so earnestly on us? his name hath made this man strong &c. vers. 16.

The three and thirtieth Observation in Nature.

THe waies and Rules of the husbandman in Ordering his fruit-trees are very strange to most people, they wonder to see many peeces of his husbandry in his Orchard, and Garden: some things seeme contrary to reason, when he cuts downe or diggs up some faire large Trees, beautifull to looke upon, and sets small weake plants in their stead, and cuts off some large tops, and branches of others, and grafes onely a few little twigs in their roomes, wrapt about with a lump of clay: when in Winter he prunes his trees, and laies their roots bare, and scores, and cuts their bodies, on every side, these (and many such like workes) are strange to most men, they have other thoughts of them then the Husbandman hath.

This shadowes out unto us, That

The dispensations of God towards his Church, are contrary to the Proposition
Judgments of most people in the world. shadowed.

In all ages, God and his waies have beene opposed, by the corrupt reasonings of men: Man in his naturall estate cannot see God, nor the things of God, he perceiveth them not, because they are spirituall discerned, 1 Cor. 2. 14.

When God is about that great worke to bring soules out of the snare, and bondage of Sathan, into the glorious liberty of the sonnes of God; his waies whereby he does this, are very strange to most men: when they see poore creatures humbled, and broken in their spirits, and sometimes almost distracted through feares, and apprehensions of wrath, or under any other great Affliction, what doe most people thinke of such? see, say they, how God plagues them for their Hypocrisy, they will presently censure them for dissemblers: David being under Afflictions, became a wonder, a monster unto many, Ps. 71. 7. they judged God had forsaken him, vers. 11. Even so it is now.

Luk. 10. 1.

And as it is thus in respect of particular persons, so also in respect of the whole Church. When God went about to enlarge his Church in the daies of the *Apostles*, how *contrary* were his *waies and dispensations* to the judgments of most then; In sending forth a few poore plaine men (two, and two) to preach the Gospel and win soules? how did the *Learned proud Pharisees*, and most of the people, despise them, and persecute them from city to city? They understood not what God was about, no more then the people of this generation. O how contrary are the dispensations of God to the apprehensions of most in this age! They speake against his waies, contradicting, and blaspheming.

Yea the waies of God are contrary to the apprehensions of many of the godly among us, some of them directly oppose God, and his great *designe*, others doe not, cannot put to their hand to further it, for they apprehend it not, they cannot close with it: In their *Sermons, Prayers, Discourses*, they speak nothing of it, to promote it, nay (being darkned through interests, and corruptions) they oppose it, and speake against it, and those who carry it on.

The reasons hereof are cheifely these.

As for all *naturall men*, they judge of things according to *carnall Principles, sence, and Reason*, now when the waies of God are not suted to these, they cannot see, nor judge of them: *The naturall man cannot perceive the things of God*, for they have no *spirituall Principles*.

1 Cor. 2. 14.

Secondly: In the people of God, there is much *pride*, and *selfe-love, carnall ends, interests &c.* which (many times) sway their *affections* much, and thereby their *Judgments* are *darkened*, according to the degrees of these corruptions: For as any soule growes in *grace*, and *holinesse*, and gets more of the *divine Nature*, or *Image of God*, so are the *things of God* more, or lesse manifest to such a one.

Thirdly, God will be seene, and acknowledged in the world, especially in his *great dispensations*, therefore are his waies often so unsuted to the apprehensions of men; but when they see at length, that God brings about his *ends* by them, which they thought so unlikely, then they admire. He will get himselfe glory in all his workings; by doing *his worke*, his *strange worke*, and bringing

bringing to passe his *Act*, his *strang act*, *Esay. 28 21*.

Hence we may see the certaine downefall of *Antichrist*, and all his partakers all the Enemies of God; because the waies of God are contrary to them, and they know them not, thence it is, that they doe, and will oppose God, and fight against him, to their owne destruction: Though the *arme of the Lord* be made bare, and lifted up never so high, and apparently in the world, in carrying on his *designes*, yet they will not see it nor acknowledg it, they will not behold the majesty of the Lord: *Esay. 26. 10.* When his hand is lifted up, they will not see, but they shall see, and be ashamed, *vers. 11.* Hardned Pharaohs, with all the blind multitude, opposers of God, his waies, and his people, shall be (at last) all cast, as a Millstone, into the midst of the sea, never to rise more.

1 Use.

Are the waies of God in the sea, and his pathes in the deepe waters, and his footsteps not knowne, and contrary to the Indgments of most, and is it too true, that many of Gods owne people stumble at his waies, and dispensations, and in a sort, oppose God, or no way help forward his *designes*; O then let us be earnest with God for wisdom from above, and his spirit, to make out the mind of God to us, not only to know the things freely given to us of God, but also to know what things are of God in the world, to know the *designes* of God in our generation, that so we may be so farre from standing out against it, as that we may comply with it, and help it on with all our might.

2 Use.

1 Cor. 2. 21. 2.

The foure and thirtieth Observation in Nature.

THe Husbandman having great Plantations in hand, calleth none to helpe him in his speciall works, about his Fruit-trees, but such persons as have skill, and experience in the severall works he sets them about: for if he should imploy ignorant, and unskilfull men about grafting, Inoculating, setting, and ordering of his young trees, they would doe more hurt, then good, therefore it is necessary his servants, and underworkmen should have some competent skill, and experience, in the works about which he employes them.

This

That shadows out unto us, That

Proposition
shadowed.

Those who have not the sanctifying Spirit, and grace of God in them, are unfit for the worke of the ministry: such bring more prejudice, then advantage to the Church of God.

Ministers of the Gospell (they who are so indeed) are Gods Husbandmen, Co. workers, fellow-laborers with God in his Orchards, and Gardens (his Churches) about his spirituall fruit-trees: We are laborers together with God, 1 Cor. 3. 9. Ye are Gods husbandry, ye are Gods building: I have planted, Apollo watered, and God have the increase, 1 Cor. 3. 6.

They are employed by God, to open blind eyes, and to turne soules from darknesse to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, Acts 26. 18. God gives them a Command, and Commission to preach the Gospell to every creature; that is, to all mankind; to teach all Nations, and to Baptize them into the Name of God: that is, Instrumentally to ingraft soules into Christ, to worke grace, or holinesse, the Nature, or Image of God, which is baptizing them into the Name of God (the Name of God, and his Nature, being all one) Christ, and his spirit (the efficient cause) being in them, and with them; who sanctifies his people, through the washing of water by the word, Ephe. 5. 26. In Christ Jesus I have begotten you, through the Gospell, 1 Cor. 4. 15.

Now whom God calls to this great worke, he prepares, and fits them (in some good measure) for it; he powres his spirit upon them, they have an unction from the holy one, who teacheth them all things, 1 Joh. 2. 20. Their wisdom is from above, James. 3. 17. By this anointing of the spirit, men are fitted for the worke of the Ministry, but without they are not fit; though they have humane learning, and parts (which are of speciall use and advantage in the Church of God, if sanctified) yet without the spirit of Christ, men are in darknesse and cannot see the things of God: They cannot say with the true ministers of Christ (who are chosen, called, and sent) the things we have heard, and seene, declare we unto you, 1 Joh. 1. 3. Luk. 1. 2, 3.

When God called, and sent, Moses, Samuel, Esay, Jeremy, and the rest of the Prophets, he fitted them for the worke: The Apostles when called, and sent, had all a Mouth, and wisdom given

given them, *Luk. 21. 15.* That is, the spirit; this anointing was powred out upon them: They were indued with power from on high, *Luk. 24. 49.*

As *Jesus Christ* the first Minister of the new Testament was fitted to preach, and publish the mind of his father, so are his people, whom he calls, and sends for that purpose: Now *Christ* was fitted by this anointing, *Esay. 61. 1.* The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tydings, &c. and *Esay 42. 1.* Behold my servant, &c. I have put my spirit upon him.

And when *Christ* sent forth his disciples to preach the Gospell, how did he prepare them for it, even by the same anointing, *Iob. 20. 21, 22.* As my father sent me, so send I you, and he breathed on them, and said receive ye the holy Ghost. Thus also the Ministers of the Gospell that succeede him; they have the same anointing, which fits them with gifts, and graces, for this worke: what ever humane learning they have (more or lesse) this anointing teacheth them, and makes them learned in the great mystery of godlinesse. *Jesus Christ* the wisdom of the father, in whom all fulnesse dwells, and the spirit of *Christ* dwells in them; hereby they are made able Ministers of the new Testament; Not of the Letter, but of the spirit, *2 Cor. 3. 6.*

Carnall men (though never so learned) know not what they say, they have the letter of the word, but the spirituall sence is veiled, and hid from them, through the darknesse of their minds; they have no insight, nor Experience in what they say: But every scribe that is instructed unto the kingdome of heaven, is like unto a man that is an housholder, which bringeth forth out of his Treasure, things new, and old, *Mat. 13. 52.*

True Ministers of the Gospell are Embassadors for *Christ*, *1 Cor. 4. 20.* they are also stewards of the Mysteries of God, *1 Cor. 4. 1.* and it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful, *verf. 2.* May it not thence be concluded, that unregenerate persons, who cannot be faithfull, are unfit to be stewards, neither are entrusted by God in this great worke?

From what hath beene said, will it not follow; That those are *1 Vse.* no true Ministers of the Gospell, who are ignorant of, and inexperienced in the great worke, and mystery of Regeneration, who have
not

not the *work* of *Grace* upon their owne hearts. They are *Theeves*, and *Robbers*, who enter not in by the *dore* (which is *Christ*) but climb up some other way, *Ioh. 10. 1.* These come to get the *fleece*, and care not if the *flock* be scattered, and torne by the *wolves*; how can they teach others, who were never taught themselves? is he fit to lead others who is blind? Now the *Naturall* man seeth not, perceiveth not spirituall things, neither can he, because they are spirituallly discerned, *1 Cor. 2. 14.*

Object.

If any shall Object, That *Judas* was an *unregenerate* person, and yet sent to preach, with the rest of the *Apostles*: It is answered: That is an *Extraordinary Example*, and foretold many generations before; Now *Extraordinary Examples* are not to be pleaded in ordinary *Cases*; it was of absolute necessity that such a one should be, that the *Scriptures* might be fully filled.

Object.

Secondly: If it be said, Though men have not the *spirit* of *God*, though they have not *grace*, yet having *Learning*, good *gifts*, and *Parts*, they may doe good therewith in the *Church* of *God*: It is answered: Although it be granted that *carnall* men in the *Ministry* (having good *Gifts*, and *endowments*) may doe some good thereby, does this prove they are therefore fit for the *Ministry*, or that they are sent of *God*, *God* of his infinite *wisdom*, and *grace*, ordereth, and overruleth all things, for good to his owne people, even the very *sinnes* of men, and *Devils*.

Answer.

But further: Though some good may be done by *carnall* *Ministers*, it cannot be denyed, but they do much more hurt, then good by their *carnall* *Interpretations*, and *Mis-applications* of the *Scriptures*, and *bad Examples*: Not having the *spirit*, not being *Learned* in the *Mysteries* of *godlinesse*, nor being taught by *wisdom* from above, they pervert the *Scriptures* to their owne, and others destruction, *2 Pet. 3. 16.* they cannot see the *things* of *God*, *1 Cor. 2. 14.* so that they deceive the *soules* of the poore *carnall* people, and lead them blindfold to hell: when the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch, into the bottomlesse *Pit*, so that as our *Saviour* bid his *disciples*, and the *multitude*, to take heede of the *Leaven*, or doctrine of the *Pharisees* (who were *fooles*, and *blind*, as to the spirituall understanding of the *Scriptures*) so also should we take heede of false *interpretations* of the *Scriptures*, by *carnall* men in our *daies*.

Doth

Doth not God reprove (and expostulate with) such for their bold undertaking in this kind, Psal. 50.16; *What hast thou to doe to Preach my Lawes, or that thou shouldst take my word in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest to be reformed?* See also Jer. 14.14. and Jer. 23. 20.

This informes us: That surely the time is at hand (and is not the day dawned already?) when the *Gospel Ministry* shall be purged, the drosse (carnall Ministers) shall be cast out, and the pure mettles preserved, according as was *Propheesied*, Mal. 3.1,2,3. when the *Messenger of the Covenant*, *Jesus Christ*, shall come, and *Raigne gloriously in the Nations*; hee will be as a *Refiners fire*, and shall sit as a *Refiner*, and *purifier of silver*, hee shall *purifie the sonnes of Levi* vers. 3. ignorant scandalous persons (who make the sacrifices of the Lord to be abhorred, (as *Elies sonnes*) the Name of God, and his Gospel to be blasphemed, and true Ministers despised, and reproached) these shall be cast out as *unsavory salt*, and a true Ministry set up, and encouraged. 2 Use.

Is not this the worke of this day? Let them therefore who are employed therein, take beede of doing the worke of the Lord negligently, but imploy, and improve their *Talent of Authority faithfully*, and *diligently*, for their Masters interest: And let all the people of God be earnest with God to carry on the worke himselfe, with his owne hand, by his owne spirit, otherwise *Instruments* may labour to no purpose, in this or any other worke: And that God would more, and more *purifie his owne people*, even those who are *most pure*; for in them there is much drosse yet unpurged out. Though I take this to be the most proper, and genuine meaning of this place, yet not with exclusion of the other.

This points out unto us, who are the true Ministers of the Gospel, even all who have received the anointing of the spirit, & are taught of God, as the truth is in *Jesus*, that are called and sent of God, and approved by his Church and people to that Office and worke: These are the true Ministers of the Gospel of Christ; these can speake of the things they have heard, and seene, 1 Job. 1.3. they have skill, and experience in the things whereof they speake: they have the tongue of the Learned (though some, it may be, not much humane learning) and know how to speak a word in season to him that 3 Use.

that is weary; because they have a fountaine of *light*, and *truth*, and *wisdom* within them, he dwells in them, in whom are *all the Treasures of wisdom, and knowledge*, Col. 2. 3. being filled with all the fulnesse of God, out of which he fills his people, who receive of him *grace for grace*, and are *changed from glory, to glory*, by his spirit, 1 Cor. 3. 18.

These are *workmen that neede not be ashamed*, rightly dividing the word of truth, 1 Tim. 2. 15.

Object.

If it be objected; If *Ministers of the Gospell* have but little *humane learning*, how will they stand themselves, and be able to maintaine the *Truths of God*, against *Learned hereticks*, and enemies of Christ?

Ans.

It is answered: *Regenerate persons* in whom Christ dwells stand

(a) It is true, the best of Gods people, upon *surer grounds*, and are more safe from (*Ministers of the Gospell*, and others) (a) *damnable Heresies* (though they have but little *humane Learning*, and but weake parts) are subiect to some errors in Judgement, as they are subiect to some *sinnes* and *infirmities* in their conversations: But then the most learned carnall person in the world; because they stand by the *Power of God*, the other, by a *humane power*: Christ hath undertaken to keepe them; none are able to pluck them out of his hand; the *gates*, the *powers of hell* shall not prevaile against them; it is not possible any should deceive the *Elect*, Mat. 24. 24.

And though they cannot (perhaps) maintaine an *Argument* in a *scholasticall* way, yet they can maintaine it in a *better way*; that is, according to *scripture*, the word of God, which dwells in them *plenteously*, in *all wisdom*; thereby they have confuted, (and so shall hereafter) their adversaries; *Out of the mouths of Babes, and sucklings* (that is, men of despised parts with the carnall world) God hath ordained strength, even to the *stilling*, and *silencing* of the *Enemy*, Ps. 8. 2.

Hath not God said this againe, and againe, in severall expressions? why will not men (even some of Gods owne people) believe it? but bring a disparagement upon the *wisdom* of Christ, and upon his people, by their contradictions, that so they may set up (secretly) some thing of *their owne*: see what the *Apostle Paul* saies to this purpose (and beware of holding the truth in unrighteousnesse) 1 Cor. 27. 28. *God hath chosen the foolish things of the*

the world, to confound the wise; and the weake things of the world, to confound the mighty things; and vile things; and things that are despised, hath God chosen, and things which art not, to bring to nought things that are.

Though the carnall wildome of men accompts the Prayers, discourtes, Arguments, Gifts, and attainments of the saints, and all their waies, to be foolish, weake, vile, vaine &c. yet even by these (the power, and spirit of Christ being in them) God will confound, and bring to nought their High things, their great things, and break downe all their strong holds, for the foolishnesse of God (as men count foolishnesse) is wiser then men, and the weaknesse of God is stronger then men, 1 Cor. 1. 25.

It is certainly the wisdom of the flesh, and not that which is from above, to conceive, that none but men bred up in Universities, are fit to preach the Gospell of Christ: For the word and spirit, are able not only to make men wise unto salvation, but also to make the man of God (Regenerate men) absolute, and thoroughly furnished unto this, and everie good worke, 2 Tim. 3. 15, 16, 17. els how are the words of the Apostle true?

These things being so, then Governours and Tutors in every 4 Use. society (where this great worke is intended) should make it their maine businesse to instruct the youth in the things of the Kingdome of God; and to be instrumentall for their Ingrafting into Iesus Christ, without which they can never be fit, nor able Ministers of the New Testament, though they have the highest attainments in Learning and parts that the nature of man is capable of.

There is great care taken to enlarge the faculties and to gaine spirituall Gifts and parts (common as well to the Reprobate as the Elect;) by study, and exercises, and all meanes possible; whereas the truth is, the attainment of these without a Principle of grace together with them, does but make men more blind in spirituall things, and makes the bouts, and barrs of corruption the stronger, to shut out Iesus Christ: As it was with the learned, but carnall Gracians (to whom Christ and the things of Christ were foolishnesse) so it is with learned unregenerate men in all ages: Therefore this is that unum necessarium, that one necessary thing, a Principle of grace, without which all humane learning and parts, are but as an empty sound, and to be accompted (as all things else) but as dung and drosse.

5 Use.

drosse to the *saving* Experimentall knowledge of Christ: this men will readily acknowledg in the *Notion*, and common apprehension, O but why is the *Practicall Iudgment* so contradictory.

Notwithstanding what hath been said, let none that are godly take occasion hereby to entertaine too high conceits of themselves, and of their abilities to *teach, and instruct others* in the things of God, upon this ground; because they are *regenerate*, and have the *spirit*, and upon that accompt be so ignorantly confident of their abilities, as to despise, or neglect *any meanes* for their growth, and increase in all *gifts and graces*, as conceiving they have all knowledg immediately upon their interest in Christ, which yet it may be, is very *weake, and little*, let us take heed of thinking more highly of our selves then we ought to thinke: but to thinke *soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of Gifts, and graces*: and let us labour to *improve our Talents*, great or small, more or few, and to lay them out for the best advantage, both of our *Master, of ourselves, and others*; Even to the glory of God, and profit, and edification of one another.

Neither ought men, from what hath beene said, to take occasion to despise, or undervalue *humane Learning, and parts*, which are of singular use in the *Church of God*, when *sanctified*, and joyned with *grace, and holinesse*.

There are very many *instances*, not onely in former ages, but also in this present generation of *Ministers of the Gospell*, and others, Men *eminent in humane Learning, and parts*, and in grace also, who have beene and are *great, and speciall Instruments* employed by God, for the destruction of *Antichrist*, and the enlargement, and building up of the *Church of God*.

The five and thirtieth Observation in Nature.

THe husbandman *Grafts all the wild Plants that he brings into his Orchard, None but engrafted Trees must grow there, None must be Pruned, and Ordered, but they must also certainly be engrafted, being wild, and naught by nature, he engrafts them with some good, and choice fruits, otherwise they will beare sower, bitter, and unpleasant fruits.*

This

This is another *Similitude* of the state of *spirituall fruit-trees* whence we learne.

That none but *Engrafted Trees* grow in Gods Orchard the Church. *Proposition shadowed.*

The *Mysticall husbandman* takes pleasure in none but such as are *Engrafted Trees*, for before *Engrafting* they bring forth fruits distastfull to him, therefore, till that be done they are not within the Walls of his Orchard the Church invisible, and soe not in his *Care, and Love*. Though many seeme to be within the *Garden enclosed*, yet they are not, And though it may in a sence be said, That many are in the Church, which are not of the Church: That's only in a Generall acceptance considered as visible professors, yet taken strictly, no *ungrafted Trees* are either in, or of the *Garden inclosed*.

The *Grafting* here spoken of is *Regeneration* or the *New birth*, This must necessarily be don, ere any can be fit *Plants* for Gods Orchard, Luke. 13. 3. *Except a man be borne againe, hee cannot see the kingdome of God*, Joh. 3. 3. And againe Joh. 15. 4. As the branch cannot beare fruit of it selfe, except it abide in the vine, noe more can ye, except ye abide in me. The Apostle shewes us this *Engrafting* in plaine termes: Rom. 6. 5. *We are Planted together in the likenesse of his death* and Rom. 11. 24. *We are Grafted contrary to Nature into a good Olive tree*.

By this *Engrafting* is that *Union*, that believers have with Christ whereby they doe as really, and truly receive *spirit, sap, life, and power* to grow, and beare fruits, as the branches of a Tree doe receive *sap, and vigour* from the *stock, and Roote* by which they increase, and beare fruits.

The *spirit*, on Christs part, and *faith* on ours, are the *tyes, and Bonds* of this union, we see the necessity of both: *Without the spirit of Christ, We are none of his*, Rom. 8. 9. and *without faith it is impossible to please him*, Rom. 14. 23. so that its certaine the husbandman will not admit of any into his heavenly Orchard, but such as are *Ingrafted Trees*.

Hence we may conclude, that many persons deceive themselves, who thinke they are of the Church of God, when indeede they are not, because they were never *ingrafted*, they live in blindnesse, and content themselves with groundlesse perswasions of their being

in Christ within the wall of his Church, when as yet they are *ungrafted Trees*, they have a forme of godlinesse, but want the power of it, 2 Tim. 3. 5. such are in a sad case, for not being within the Wall of Gods inclosed Garden, they are out of his care, and protection (otherwise then by his common providence) they have none of the speciall, and peculiar priviledges of his engrafted Trees. O labour to get into Christ.

The fix and thirtieth Observation in Nature.

Some fruit-trees bring forth fruits rough, and of a bad colour, and of a harsh, and sharp tast, and yet these fruits are more wholesome for the body then some other fruits which are smooth, beautifull to looke upon, and sweete to the tast, for all sharp, and bitter things are absterive, and cleanse the body from dull, and phlegmaticke humours, whereas sweete things much used stuffe up and choake the passages of the body.

*Proposition
shadowed,*

This shadowes out unto us this Proposition: That

Those fruits of spirituall fruit-trees which are harsh, sharp, and bitter are (for the most part) more profitable then such as are mild, and pleasant.

The words and dealings of Parents towards their children, and of one freind towards another which are sometimes tart and sharp, usually worke better effects then indulgent, and smooth dealings, which usually cockers up and imboldens children in licentiousnesse Pro. 29. 17. correct thy sonne and he shall give thee rest, yea he shall give delight to thy soule.

The common saying is: spare the Rod and spill the Child, whereas seasonable reproofes, and due correction restraines corruptions from breaking forth.

The sad example of *Elies sonnes* is sufficient to prove this, whose mild, and indulgent behaviour towards them emboldned them in destructive courses, the miserable consequences whereof were upon his whole family, 1 Sam. 2. 30, 35.

So also among familiar freinds, the fruit of the lips that is sometimes tart and bitter at present is found many times more profitable, and of better effect, than that which is mild, and gentle: such are most faithfull freinds as deale most plainly with us, though sometimes their words, reproofes, and dealings, may seeme harsh and tart, in case of some offence or neglect of duty, they are farre better freinds then such as will sooth up a man in all his waies, or els be silent, in respect of reproofs, Prov. 28. 23. *He that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favour then he that flattereth with his lips:* And againe, Pro. 27. 6. *faithfull are the wounds of a freind, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitfull.*

The Prophet knew these tart fruits to be best, Psal. 141. 5. *Let the righteous smite me and reprove me, for that is good for me.*

Thus it is also betweene God, and us: The fruits of his love in sharpe, and bitter corrections, do (for the most part) prove better, and more profitable to us, then pleasant, and sweete prosperity, Pf. 119. 72. *It is good for me that I have beene in trouble, &c.*

We should hence learne not to judg of things according to Use, hence, and present feeling, and apprehensions, but according to their consequences, and effects; knowen by the word and experience: As a man values Physick, not according to the tast, and relish, but according to the profitable effects that it works.

So although harsh dispensations from God and dealings from men may seeme at present not joyous but greivous, yet they afterwards worke the peaceable fruit of righteousnessse Heb. 12. 11. *more then cherishings according to the flesh.*

The seven and thirtieth Observation in Nature.

Fruit trees beare no fruits in Autumne, except they bud and Blossome in the spring: The Husbandman looks not to receive a harvest offruits from Trees, that doe not prepare Buds and Blossoms, and bring them forth in the spring of the yeare: But such as
L 3
blossoms

blossome well in the spring, give good hopes of fruits in their seasons.

Hence we learne: That

Those persons are not like to bring forth good fruits in old age, who labour not for them in time of youth.

Proposition shadowed.

When men labour, and are diligent in good Employments in their youth, there is some hopes of fruit-fulnesse in after times: But what profitable fruits for the good of the Church of God, Common wealth, or their owne comfort, can those persons bring forth in the *Autumne of their life or old age*, who spend their youth, or spring time, in idlenesse, and sensuall pleasures, and make no preparation then, by study labour, and diligence, in all good things, for fruits afterwards whereof themselves, and others might eat, and be satisfied?

Will the Husbandman expect a Harvest, without a seed time? *Prov. 20. 4. The sluggard ploweth not &c. therefore shall he begg in harvest, and have nothing.*

The foolish Virgins sleepe, while they should labour and prepare Oyle, therefore they shall be shut out, when others enter in with the Bridegroom, *Math. 25. 11.*

1 Use.

Here we see why it is that so many aged, and declining persons are so ignorant of God, and destitute of any profitable knowledg, or good fruits, they trified away their spring time, they did not blossom then, nor prepare for fruits in Autumne.

2 Use.

Let this quicken every one, whose spring is not yet past, now to bud and blossom, by diligence, and all good endeavours, now to sow good seede plentifully, that soe they may reape a full, and joyfull harvest, *Ecc. 12. 1. Now to remember their Creator in the daies of their youth, before the evill daies come, &c.*

We may learne this providence even from the least, and lowest ranke of living Creatures, the Bees, and the Ants, these in spring, and sommer provide; and lay up for winter, *Prov. 6. 6.*

This is a thing of high concernment indeede, O let youth now labour to get themselves implanted into Christ; *Rom. 6. 5.* and then they will bud, and Blossome, and bring forth fruits, some in youth, and more in Autumne & Old age, *Pl. 92. 13. such as be planted in the house*

house of the Lord, shall flourish in the Courts of our God, they shall bring forth more fruit in old age.

The eight and thirtieth Observation in Nature.

Fruit-trees that are not profitable are hurtfull: if they beare not fruits they cannot be said to be harmelesse, such as although they doe no good, yet they doe no hurt; but there are positive evils, (and harme in, and by them, losse, and prejudice to the husbandman, they suck away the juyce, and fertility of the earth, spoyle or hurt the hearbs, flowers, and plants, which growes under them, With droppings and shade, they fill up the roome where profitable fruit-trees might stand, the husbandman looses his labour about them, and is discredited by them, &c.

This shadowes out unto us this Proposition.

That those who doe not act for God, they act against *Proposition shadowed,*
him.

There are one sort of persons who are clearly, and evidently Active for God, others as much against him, taking part with his enemies; but there are a third sort who thinke it a speciall point of wisdom to sit still, and act neither on the one side, nor on the other, let them goe too, say they, Wee'l not meddle, its good being quiet, why should we put our finger into the fire when wee may keepe it out? but let such know, they are the very enemies of God, as well, as really, as those who act visibly against him: for not to act for God, is to act against him, *Judg. 5. 23.* Curse ye Meroz, said the Angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not out to the help of the Lord, to the helpe of the Lord against the mighty. And *Luk. 11. 23.* he that is not with me, is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

He that is not on Christs side, is on his enemies side; men may speake, and act against Christ when they are silent, and sit still, the sentence shall be pronounced against them at the last day, as well for not feeding and clothing, and visiting Christ in his Members, as for beating or wronging of them, *Mat. 25. 43.*

This

1 Use.

This shewes us what esteeme God hath of *luke*. warme professors, who have noe heate, nor life in the cause of God, who looke not after the interest of his sonne Christ; No although they have particular Obligations lying upon them to be *actives* such who are set in Office, and power, for this very end, and purpose, to be active for God, yet how little doe many doe, in discharge of the trust reposed in them. Let such know, *not to Act for God is to act against him.*

2 Use.

Let this quicken us all to be active for God, otherwise God will correct coldnesse, and neglects, even in his owne people: *Moses, Aaron, Eli,* were not spared in this case: but were scourged for neglects.

Doubtlesse God is as jealous for his honour now, as ever, and he lookes that every one of his people (in his spheare wherein he moves) should act with life, and zeale for him. And to those to whom he hath given much power, and authority, of them he requires the more.

The nine and thirtieth Observation in Nature.

THe husbandman looks for more fruits from some of his fruit-trees then from some others, those upon which he bestowes most time, cost, and labour, from those he expects most fruits. And is displeased if his expectation be not answered accordingly.

This shadowes out unto us: That

Proposition
shadowed.

God expects greater returnes of duty from some persons, then from some others, and neglect thereof provokes God against them.

In the Ceremoniall Law God required more sacrifices from the Rich, then from the Poore: such as had great store of Oxen, Sheepe, and other things to be offered in sacrifice should not have beene accepted had they offered a paire of Turtle doves, or two young Pigeons, which yet were accepted from the poorer sort of persons: So also under the Gospell: To whom much is given, of them doth he require the more, *Luk. 12. 48.* God had done great things for *Eli*

for *Eli*, and *David*, and expected (accordingly) greater returnes of duty, and obedience, all their lives after; but they failing in some great particulars, God is sore displeased with them, and reckons up the great benefits, and particular engagements they had received, and tels them he expected other returnes from them.

1 Sam. 2. 27,
28. 2 Sam.
12. 8.

So also *Hizekiah* received much, and God looked for answerable returnes: but he rendred not according to the benefits received, 2 Cro. 23. 25. & God was displeased with him upon that account.

God planted a Vineyard, *Esay*. 5. 1, 2. and bestowed much care, and paines about it, and looked for an answerable returne of good fruits, but because it brought forth wild grapes instead of good and pleasant grapes, he laid it wast. Some have received more, and lye under greater engagements from God, than others, therefore God lookes to receive more.

This shewes us the great danger such persons lye under, who have received much from God, and returne but little; having received many Talents, and not making an answerable returne, by improving of them to the honour of God, and advantage of his people; Nay, who perhaps use all against God, and his people.

God gives to some many Gifts of Nature, and Common Graces, much knowledg, learning, wisdom, great riches, honours, Offices, Places, much time, liberty, great, and choice meanes of grace, speciall providences, and dispensations, and many other Talents which others have not: of these God requires more, than of those who have fewer, and lesse of these things, and the not making futable Returnes, provokes God against them.

2 Use.

If God spared not his choice servants, *Eli*, *David*, *Ezekiah*, &c. If Judgment begin at the house of God, how shall the ungodly, and sinner escape? 1 Pet. 4. 17.

Let every one of us consider what we have received, that soe we may make unto God some answerable returne: God looked for more (and received more) from him that had the five Talents, than from him that had received but two. *Matth* 42. 5. 23.

Noe one (not the lowest, or meanest) is freed from making returnes of duty to God: though God require much from those who have received much, yet the meane person, who has but a little, must returne of that little; *Eph*. 4. 28. Let him worke with his hands, that he may have something to give to him that needeth. And it will

be accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not, 2Cor. 8. 12.

So also, of the use and improvement of all other Talents, gifts, graces, liberty, Power, and the rest.

The fortieth Observation in Nature.

Although Fruit-trees bring forth many, great, and beautifull fruits, yet they are not esteemed, except also they have a good tast, it is the relish that gives the Commendation to fruits.

This shadowes out unto us: That

*Proposition
shadowed,*

It is not the multitude (nor exactnesse of performance) of duties, that God accepts, unlesse there be sincerity, and right ends in doing thereof.

The *Tast of Mysticall Fruits*, lies in the *sincerity, and truth* of the heart: *sincerity, and right Ends*, is that which God chiefly looks at, and accompts upon it accordingly: *Alisio denominatur a fine*, The end denominates a worke good, or bad, it is the forme of every duty.

The great end must be the glory of God, (though we may have subordinate ends, our owne happinesse, and others) being Married to Christ, we must bring forth fruit unto God, Rom 7. 8. Trees of righteousness, being trees of the Lords planting, they bring forth fruit, that he may be glorified, Esay. 61. 3. so Joh. 15. Truth, sincerity, Love, right ends, these make fruits tast pleasantly, for without Love, there cannot be right ends, And therefore the Apostle saith 1 Cor. 13. Though a man have all knowledg, all faith, though he bestow all his goods to feede the poore, and doe never so many good works, yet if they tast not of love, they are nothing worth, if there be not sincerity and right ends, God accompts not of them.

Many are but empty Vines, because they bring forth fruit to themselves: fruits as good as no-fruit, when they have no good tast, which they have not, when the Ends are not right.

Hos. 10. 1.

The

The *Pharisees* brought forth faire and goodly fruits to looke upon, *Mat. 6. 2.* they *Preached, they prayed much, they gave much almes, they fasted, payed tithes, &c.* but the *tast* of these fruits was naught, they had no love to God, they wanted *sincerity, right ends*, in what they did, *Matth. 6. 2.* They did them to be seene of men: for themselves, and not for God.

Hence we may learne that much of the fruit that is brought forth in the world, is not accepted of God, because it wants a good *tast*, though they are beautifull to looke upon, as to the matter and substance, yet they may be but as *Apples of Sodom*, faire on the outside, but rotten within, of an unpleasant *tast*. Men for the most part bring forth fruit unto themselves, they aime at their owne profits, honours, or something mainely and cheifely, if not wholly for themselves: but the *honour of God, the interest of Christ*, is not in their eye, their Love in their works is but *selfe-Love*.

Let us try the *tast* of our fruits, whether we have sincere, and right ends in what we doe, whether they *tast* of Love, Love to God, and his people. Let all your workes be done in Love, *1 Cor. 16. 14.* Oh how sweete and pleasant is the *tast* of those fruits, which spring from a principall of love to God, upon the apprehension of his Love to us in Christ!

Seeing the *tast* of fruits makes them acceptable to God, this is a ground of great comfort to every poore weake Christian whose fruits though they are but small, and want outward beauty, yet because they have a good *tast*, the husbandman likes them well, they are pleasant fruits in his accompt, because their hearts are perfect, there is truth, sincerity, love, holy and right ends mixed with their fruits, soe that the husbandman delights to come into his Garden, and to eat these his pleasant fruits, *Cant. 4. 16.*

The widowes two mites were but very small fruits, and yet because our Lord liked the *tast*, he said they were better, and more acceptable, than any, or ail of the *Pharisees* great and many fruits, *Math. 12. 43.*

The one and fortieth Observation in Nature.

When Grasse begin to grow by the sap they receive from the stock, they will certainly (by the Law of Naturr) hold on, untill they come to perfection.

The Proposition shadowed: That

Proposition shadowed, The smallest measure of true grace in any person, can never be extinguishd, but will certainly grow up to perfection.

Grace is compared to a graine of Mustard-seede, *Mat. 17. 20.* which though it be but a very small substance, yet in a while, it growes to a great one; Though it be but as a sparke of fire in flax, it shall not be quenched. *E say. 42. 3.* it will increase to a great flame.

To see (and be convinced of) the want of Christ, and to desire after him, is the smallest measure of grace, which yet shall certainly increase: such a hungry soule shall at last be filled, and satisfied with the fullnesse of Christ, *Mat. 5. 6.*

If the spirit have cast the seeds, and Principles of grace into the soule, he will water them, and cause them to grow, and bud, and blossome, and bring forth fruits: To him that hath shall be given; and he shall have abundance, *Mat. 25. 29.*

All the powers of hell cannot rob the soule of the least measure of grace.

Use.

This is unspeakable Consolation to all believers, though never so weak in grace, though they have but a drop of the water of life, yet it shall be a well of water springing up to eternall life, *Joh. 4. 14.*

And therefore dejected, and weary soules that feare the worke of grace is not in them, that long after Christ, and would faine be satisfied that they have an interest in him; Let such know the seede of God is in them, sown by his spirit, and therefore it is that they have these desires, thirstings, longings, &c. and cannot be satisfied without Christ. These motions and workings of soule are not any where, but where the spirit dwels, and where he hath begun the worke of grace: these are sure evidences that they are united

united to Christ, and ingrafted into him, and these buds, and breakings forth shew clearely (to a discerning eie) that they have taken hold of the stock, and that they have received from it, some sap and life, and therefore can never be broken off, nor die, but they shall certainly spring up, and grow to perfection, and bring forth the fruits of Love, joy, and praise to all eternity, for he who hath begun a good worke in them, will perfect it, Phil. 1.6.

The two and fourtieth Observatioo in Nature.

THose fruit-trees about which the husbandman tryes his skill most and about which he takes most paines, if these are barren, or bring forth naughty fruits, they discredit him more then many others.

Proposition
shadowed.

This shadowes out unto us: That

God hath more dishonour by the sinnes of Professours, than by the sinnes of others.

Persons who have interest in, and relation one to another, bring dishonour, or Reputation one upon another, according as they walke: a man is commonly judg'd according to his associates, or Companions, soe doe the waies of the people of God (or those who professe themselves to be so) reflect upon God either for hishonour, or dishonour.

The sin of *Elies* sonnes brought more dishonour to God, than the sinnes of many others, because of their Relation to God, in respect of their Office: They made even the Offerings of the Lord to be abhorred. 2 Sam. 12. 14.

Many Professours, through their Pride, earthly-mindednesse, and other offensive walking, bring a reproach upon the Profession of Religion, and consequently upon God himselfe, Rom. 2. 24. The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.

When the enemies of God see Professours walke scandalously, and behave themselves unanswerable to their profession, these things reflect even upon God: James 2. 7. do not they blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called, like as the heathen did of old?

Ezek. 36. 20. They profaned my holy name when they said to them, these are the people of the Lord, which are come out of his Land. Even so now, some say in scorne of Professors (when they walk contrary to the Gospell,) These are the people of the Lord, these are the saints, the Brethren &c. And hereby they profane, and blaspheme the name of God, and bring reproach upon his waies, and his Gospell: By reason of whom the way of truth shall be evill spoken of: 2 Pet. 2. 2.
M Boulton saies, That a dissolute Minister, is a thousand times more pernicious, than an hundred private men, though practising villany in the highest degree. So also (in some proportion) it may be said of any that make profession of the Gospell.

1 Use,

We may herein see the cause why God sometimes dealeth so sharply with his own people; *Eli, David, Solomon &c.* (though eminently in the favour of God,) yet he punished their offences with the Rod, and their iniquity with scourges, which made them and their posterity smart, for many generations after.

2 Use.

O let this move every one that nameth the name of *Jesus* to depart from iniquity: every one that professeth the Gospell to be tender of the name of God, to walk warily, and circumspectly; very many Professors give Offence, and scandall, by those two grand accursed Lusts of *Pride, and Earthly-mindednesse*, As their gifts and some outward advantages, increase, so (usually) *Pride* increaseth, and discovers it selfe; And as this filthy venomous Plant growes, and increaseth in the soule, it much hinders, and keepes downe the Plants of grace, where they are, so that they become poore, and feeble. And as for *Earthly-mindednesse*, which the *Apostle* calls *Idolatri*, and the Roote of all evill *Coll. 3. 5.* It is of all things most unbecoming those that profess to have their *Treasure and inheritance in heaven.*

O what a dishonour is this unto *Jesus Christ*, as though there were not enough to be had out of the fulnesse of *Christ*, to satisfy the soules of his people, but they must come for supplies to *Creatures*: Out of all doubt, those soules where this Lust prevails, have little, or no *Communion* with God, let them pretend what they will, for love of the world is (as a holy man saies) the very Canker, and Cut-throte, of all heavenly-mindednesse; So that proud, earthly-minded Professors shame the Gospell, and dishonour God more than others.

The three and fortieth Observation in Nature.

IF fruit-trees are Ingrafted while they are very young, the worke is soone done, and is scarce perceived afterwards, whether it be ingrafted or no, otherwise then by the fruits. But if the worke be delay'd untill the trees are grown great, and strong, then the worke is more difficult, and manifest afterwards, not only by the fruits, but also by some visible, and apparent marks upon the tree.

This shadowes out unto us, That
Conversion in youth is not so apparent as in elder yeares.

Proposition
shadowed.
See Obser.

Some are called the first houre of the day, and some the third, some the sixth, and some the last houre *Mat.* 20. 1, 2. Some are sanctified from the Womb, some early in their youth: others after many yeares. Now for those in whom the spirit of God beginnes to worke by meanes of Religious education in Child-hood, and youth, when they come to yeares, they are (usually) subject to doubtings, and feares, about their spirituall condition, more than others, when they heare, & reade of some who have gone through straits, and difficulties, feares, and terrors, in their New-birth, and cannot speak of any such thing out of their own experience: This is usually a ground (through their own weaknesse, and Satans subtilty) of questioning their *Estates*. Because the work of grace in these, is beguonne insensibly, and growes up by degrees hardly to be perceived. *Mark.* 4. 27. *It springs up, and growes they know not how.*

But such as are converted after many yeares of living in a carnal unregenerate state, these are converted with greater difficulty, and more remarkably, one contrary discovers, and sets off another clearly, and a sudden change of states, makes the thing more manifest.

Any works that have small, and weak beginnings, and that go on but slowly, -and by degrees, these make no noise, are scarce perceived; But works that have violent beginnings, and are carried on with power, and speede, these awaken every mans observation.

The

The *Faylors Conversion* was remarkable, because there was a speedy change wrought, from one state to another, *Act. 16.* So also the *Conversion of S. Paul*, was a manifest change, *Act. 9.* The like of many others: as both *Scripture*, and *experience* shew us.

1 Use,

This may help to satisfy those who question their Conversion, chiefly upon this ground, for that they cannot declare (as some others can) *how, where, and when*, they were first wrought upon, who yet are certainly ingrafted into the *Stock Jesus Christ*. The Spirit (its likely) beganne early with them, and cast seed into their minds, while they were but of tender yeares, *which grew up they knew not how*, as our Saviour saies *Mark. 4. 27.* The husbandman bended the Twig while it was young, and tender, and engrafted it, and pruned, and ordered it unto a comely Tree, and made it fruitfull; And the work then was done with more ease and lesse observation then it is usually afterwards.

Such as these must Labour to satisfy themselves, and make their *Calling, and Election* sure, chiefly by trying of their fruits: examining them by the word of God. See *Observ. in Nature 8. & 22.*

The foure and fortieth Observation in Nature.

IN a Fruit-tree the Bigg and great Boughes are but a few in Number, in respect of the small Boughes, there are multitudes of little small Boughes, branches, and Twiggs upon a Tree, for one great Bough.

Proposition
shadowed,

This shadowes out unto us: That

The great persons in the World, who are in Christ, are but few in number, in respect of the meaner sort.

Wee see by too much experience, That the rich, and great ones of the world (for the most part) refuse Christ; Their licentious lives, their walking according to the flesh, sufficiently testify that such who so walke, are in a Carnall state, but those that follow Christ, as his Disciples, are (generally) of the meaner sort of persons; The Apostle is expresse in this, *1 Cor. 1. 26, 27.* Ye see your calling, Brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many Mighty, not many Noble are called. But, *1 Jam. 2. 5.* God hath chosen

chosen the poore of this world, rich in faith, and heires of the Kingdome, which he hath promised to them that love him. Joh. 7.48. Have any of the Rulers, or Pharisees beleevd on him? But the Poore receive the Gospell.

This calls aloud to all great persons, to try, and examine themselves, whether they be in the faith. Lest they be of the number of those who have their portion in this life.

There is no reason any one should envy, or desire the condition of Carnall eminent persons. That sparke, or blaze of seeming glory; may quickly be extinguished in everlasting darknesse.

The five and fortieth Observation in Nature.

THe Branches, and Boughes of fruit-trees are tossed, and shaken by the winds, yet there is no danger of their falling while the Roote remaines firme in the Earth.

Hence we learne, That

Although believers are shaken by the winds of Temptations, yet they cannot be overturned, because they are fixed upon Christ.

Proposition

We have no promise that we shall be free from Temptations, ^{shadowed.} ~~to~~ ^{ings,} and shakings in this life; but rather are foretold of them: Joh. 16. 33. In the World yee shall have tribulations, but be of good cheare, I have overcome the World. But we have a sure promise that no Temptation shall be too hard for us: 1 Cor. 10. 13. The house built upon the Rocke, shall stand against all the floods, windes, and stormes of Temptations, Matth. 7. 24.

The faithfulnessse, and all the Attributes of God are ingaged for our safety, and deliverance: 1 Cor. 10. 13. God is faithfull who will not suffer you to be tempted above your strength, but will give an issue to every Temptation that yee may beare it. ^{1 Pet. 1. 5.}

Job, David, Heman and many others; we read, were much shaken with windes and stormes of Temptations, but yet they were all the while safe, they were not overturned, because they were fixed upon Christ, they were Rooted in him.

So all the people of God are as Mount Sion, which cannot be removed, but abideth fast for ever, Pl. 125. 1.

This is a ground of great Consolation to believers, in their greatest Troubles: Though they passe through the waters, they shall not be drowned, though they walke through the fire, they shall not be burnt, *E/ay. 43. 2.*

Though they (as Branches of a tree) are shaken and tossed this way and that way, yet they shall not be overturned, because they grow upon the Roote, and their stock, or Roote is stedfast and immoveable.

The fix and fortieth Observation in Nature.

IRregular Buds, or shoots of fruit-trees, are easily rubbed, or broken off at their first putting forth; but if let alone, they will grow great, and strong, soe that then it will be far more difficult to cut, or break them off.

Proposition
shadowed,

The Proposition shadowed hereby is: That Sinfull thoughts, and motions in the soule, are most easily suppressed, at their first rising.

If we give way to the motions of Corruption within us, they will grow, & gather strength, & be much more hard to master, & bring downe, than at their first stirrings.

Solomon (upon this Accompt) adviseth to be aware, and to leave off Contention in the beginning, so soone as it begins to appeare *Prov. 17. 14.* The Children of Mystickall Babilon must be dash't in peeces, soe soone as they are borne.

If a Poole of water begin to break the Bank, its wisdom to stop the breach suddenly, els it quickly growes wider, and more hard to be done.

Diseases are more easily cured at first, then when they have got strength; so spirituall diseases.

Use.

Its a great point of spirituall wisdom, to watch over the heart, to suppress risings of Lusts, and Corruptions quickly: And therefore let us take and observe Solomons advice, *Prov. 4. 23.* to keepe the heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.

The seven and fortieth Observation in Nature.

From one fruit-tree are sometimes taken Grafts for many trees, which being ingrafted upon severall stocks, multitudes of other Trees are thereby propagated, and increased; which also beare store of good fruits.

Proposition shadowed: That

The Instructions of one godly person, sometimes are effectually Proposition (by the Spirit) to the implanting of many into Christ. shadowed.

As one sinner destroyeth much good, Prov. 9. 18. so (often) one good man is the Instrument, and meanes of much good: God makes use of him for the conversion of many unto God; He turnes many to righteousness: Dan: 12. 3.

Many Grafts of good Motion, counsels, and Instructions, are sometimes taken from one good man, which take hold, and grow in the minds of many others, as long as they live.

Grafts taken from that excellent fruit-tree, the Apostle Peter, were effectually to the ingrafting of many into Christ, Acts 2. 37. 41. The same day there were added unto them about 3000 soules: And againe: Acts 4. 4. Many of them which heard the word believed, and the number of the men were about 5000. Their Counsels and Instructions were ingrafted into their Minds, as the Apostle speaks, James 1. 21. Receive with meeknesse the Ingrafted word.

The word takes hold, and rooting in the heart, as a Graft in the stock, which growes there, and brings forth fruit: Col. 1. 6. The Gospell is come unto you, and bringeth forth fruit. Good Mystical fruit-trees (holy men) afford many good Grafts (Pr. 15. 4. a wholesome Tongue is a tree of life, which affords many good Grafts) whereby many other fruit-trees are increased of the same kind. Trees of righteousness of the Lords planting, Es. 61. 3. which beare store of good fruits to the husband-man.

This should ingage us to shew love, and reverence to holy men, not only for that they beare the Image of God upon their spirits, and bring forth good fruits. But also for that they are the meanes of so much good to others. Who by their Prayers, Preaching, Printing, Instructions, Government, and good examples, are instruments, and meanes, of bringing many soules to God, of Ingrafting, and multiplying fruit-trees in Gods inclosed Garden.

The eight and fortieth Observation in Nature.

FRuit-trees being Ingrafted, they Naturally bring forth good fruits, Because a new, and another Nature (in the graft) is joyned to the wild Plant on which it is Grafted; Notwithstanding some mixture of the Nature of the wild stock; yet the Graft overrules, to bring forth good fruits according to its owne Nature.

*Proposition
shadowed,*

This is another Similitude of the state of Mysticall fruit-trees, and shadowes out unto us this Proposition: That

Persons ingrafted into Christ, doe naturally bring forth good fruits.

Every regenerate person hath two natures in him the divine Nature, and Corrupt Nature. And these two Natures act in him all his life times: But notwithstanding corrupt Principles, the divine Nature prevails in believers, for the generall course of their lives.

Ye are partakers of the divine Nature (saith the Apostle) 2 Pet. 1.4. whereby persons ingrafted into Christ, are carried out to act for God according to that Nature, and soe bring forth good fruits Naturally: their fruits taking their denomination from the better Nature.

Believers have the Image of God renewed in them, and his Law written in their hearts, That is knowledg, dispositions, and inclinations carrying them (by a spirituall naturall power) to what is holy, just, and good, in some degree as Adam had in his innocency: soe that they Naturally bring forth good fruits, and have a Naturall

all propension, aptnesse and inclination to the things of God, as unregenerate persons have to carnall things. And where this divine Principle, or spirituall Nature, hath attained high degrees, where grace is at a high pitch, and the soule in a spirituall frame, there the workings of it are more cleare and apparent. There is a Naturall disposition, affection, and inclination towards God, and the things of God, even to all spirituall things, as spirituall: Rom. 8. 5. *They that are after the spirit, doe mind the things of the spirit.*

Notwithstanding the crosse workings, and stirrings of Corrupt nature, yet (for the generall) the movings, and workings of the spirits of Believers, and the fruits they bring forth, are according to this spirituall nature. Rom. 8. 1. *They walke after the spirit,* and Rom. 7. 25. *With my mind I serve the law of God.* The generall course of their lives is spirituall, or spiritually Naturall, as springing from that Mysticall roote, the spirit of Christ, acting those spirituall dispositions, & inclinations which he hath fixed in the soule.

This may prove Prof'ssours whether they be sound or no; let them examine their Principles from which they act: whether they are acted in the waies of God, from a spirituall, and divine Principle within, or from motives, or Considerations from without: whether it be not Customs, Examples, Counsells or Commands of men, interest in, or engagements of freinds, Praise of men, outward advantages, or at best, Naturall Conscience, that moves them, and carries them on in Religious waies.

Hereby we know that the waies of God are easy, and pleasant waies, for whatsoever we do naturally, we do easily, and with delight; It is (in some degrees) with the adopted sonnes of God, as with his Naturall sonne, in this respect, to accompt it their meat and drink to doe the will of their heavenly father: so that this is a great encouragement to all, to give up their names to Christ, Prov. 3. 17. *His waies are waies of pleasantnesse, and all his paths are peace.*

The nine and fortieth Observation in Nature.

THere are but few Ingrafted trees in a Countrey, in comparison of those ungrafted: there are many thousands in the woods, and vast grounds, of wild trees, the number of which farre exceeds the number of the trees of the Garden.

The Proposition shadowed.

Proposition shadowed. That there are but a few Godly persons in the World, in comparison of the number of the wicked.

This appeares expressly, *Matth. 7. 13, 14.* Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that goe in thereat. Because strait is the Gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it: so againe *Matth. 20. 16.* Many are called, but few are chosen.

Experience makes this too manifest: most imbrace this present world, and but few deny themselves, and follow Christ: few in the world make profession of Christ in comparison of the multitudes of Idolaters in other Nations: And of those who make profession, how many Hypocrites, to one true hearted Nathaniel?

The godly are in number, as the gleanings of Grapes, when the Vintage is done: Or as the shaking of an Olive tree, two or three Berries in the top of the uppermost bough, foure, or five in the outmost Branches thereof, *Esay. 17. 6.*

1 Use. This is a sad Consideration, and should make us take up a lamentation for the state of mankind.

2 Use. This should stirr up every one to labour with all diligence to make their calling, and election sure, to know they are of the number of the little flock.

The fiftieth Observation in Nature.

Some wild, and ungrafted trees beare fruits very like to those that are Ingrafted in shape, and colour, so that men often mistake the one for the other. This

This shadowes out unto us this Proposition:

That the Works of formall hypocrites are (in many things) very like the works of true Christians. Proposition shadowed.

Many Formall Professours have speciall eminent Gifts and abilities, which (it may be) exceede those of some reall Christians, they can Preach, Pray, and discourse well, and can make a shift to carry themselves so, as to gaine some good opinion among men; yea, and passe for Sincere Professors.

Who were more exact in their lives (as to outward performances of duties) then the Scribes and Pharisees, in Preaching, Praying, giving to the Poore? &c. and yet our saviour charges them with Hypocrisie, *Matth. 23. 27, 28.* Woe unto you scribes, and Pharisees, Hypocrites, for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeede appeare beautifull outwardly, &c. Ye outwardly appeare righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy, and iniquity.

So it is at this day: the fruits of many seeming Christians appeare beautifull outward, as if they were the fruits of ingrafted trees, whereas in truth they are but the fruits of wild Trees.

1 Use.

This being so we ought to set our selves to distinguish fruits that are brought forth, both our owne, & others, that we take not Crabs for Apples; Let us not judg of fruits by their Bulke, or substance, Beauty, and forme, or Number, but by their Nature, and quality, their Taste: A spirituall Palate is able (for the most part) to tast the fruits that are brought forth by men: he that is spirituall judgeth all things, *1 Cor. 2. 15.* Spirituall men have the Law written in their hearts, knowledg, dispositions, inclinations, a frame and temper of spirit (in some degree) answerable to the mind of God; This spirituall Nature in the soule, by the assistance of the spirit of God together with the written word, is the guide of all believers, thereby they judg of good, and evill fruits, of wild, and of Ingrafted Trees, *1 Cor. 2. 12.* See Observ. 40.

The

The one and fiftieth Observation in Nature.

Some grafts are in part prepared by the husbandman in Order to Ingrafting, and yet through neglect, or unskilfulnesse in Ordering, or hurts by Men, Cattle, hot sunnes, dry winds, or something els, they are spoiled, and never take hold of the stock, whereby they should grow to perfection.

This shadowes out unto us: That

Proposition
shadowed.

Some Persons are wrought upon in part (in some things) like to those that are Ingrafted into Christ, who yet never attaine to be really united to him.

The Spirit of God Convinceth the World of sin, as well Reprobates, as the Elect, they are sometimes terrified with the apprehensions of the wrath and justice of God for sin, and may (for a time) lye under the spirit of Bondage, and common convictions of the spirit, & may have knowledg, & some common graces, & reformation in part, & make a Profession; And yet after all, through negligence, Workings of Satan, and the world, they come short of Christ.

The young man in the Gospell Mat. 19. had some good beginnings, some civill righteousness, & being by Christ told what to do more, he slinks back from Christ, and went his way to his earthly possessions. So the hearers, Luk. 8. 13. they heare the word, and believe for a time, but in temptation fall away. And many of the disciples of Christ, Iohn. 6. 66. went back, and walked noe more with him. also 1 Ioh. 2. 19. They went out from us &c so many in these daies: having begun well, after a while they fall off, and with Demas embrace this present world.

Gal. 5. 7. Ye did
run well, who did
binder?

1 Use.

Let us not hastily conclude of any ones being in the state of grace, because of some beginnings, and progresse in a Profession.

2 Use.

This should stir up every one to go on towards perfection, not to rest in beginnings, but to presse forward towards the Marke: And to give all possible diligence to make our Calling, and Election sure, and to put that great Question out of Question,

tion, whether or no we are really in Christ, whether we receive sap and life from that stock to grow, and bring forth good fruits, if so; then certainly we shall persevere unto the end.

The two and fiftieth Observation in Nature.

THe least, and most crooked Ingrafted tree brings forth better fruits, without any artificiall helps, then the fairest tree with all the art that can be used to it, if ungrafted.

This Similitude shadowes out unto us this Proposition.

That the meanest person in Christ, brings forth better fruits, then the most accomplished unregenerate person in the Proposition world.

shadowed.

Every believer is acted by the spirit of God, and spirituall Principles, and all their spirituall fruits spring from Christ their roote, and thence it is that they are of such accompt with God; But unregenerate persons cannot doe one good worke, cannot bring forth one good fruit, because they have no spirituall Principles, they have not the spirit of God, as to any renewing, sanctifying operations in them, but are wholly carnall, and therefore whatsoever proceeds from them is so, Jo. 3. 6. *That which is of the flesh, is flesh.* And Tit. 1. 15. *To them that are defiled, and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their minds and consciences are defiled.* As from a muddy fountaine flowe impure streames, or from a corrupt Roote spring naughty fruits, so from the spirits of carnall persons proceed fleshy operations: The carnall mind is enmity against God, Rom. 8. 7. *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God,* vers. 8. *Their grapes are grapes of gall, their Clusters are bitter,* Deut. 32. 32.

But the fruits of believers are sweete and pleasant fruits, because they spring from the true Vine, Job. 15. *So that the husbandman will come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits,* Cant. 4. 16.

Hence we may see the grosse mistake of most people in the world, who value spirituall fruits according to bulke, and outward beauty: The Sermons, books, discourses &c. of great men, are for

1 Use.

the most part cryed up, and had in estimation (especially, if they be not only eminent in *Place, and Office*, but also in *learning, and Gifts*) who yet in the meane time neglect, or slight the *Sermons, Prayers, booke, and discourses* of persons low in the world, and in *Gifts, and naturall endowments*, though these proceede from a *gracious heart, a renewed nature, and the spirit of God*, though they have a *tast, a savour, and relish of the divine Nature*, and have a *veine of holinesse running through them*, which God himselfe, and his people, who are most spirituall, are delighted with. But the naturall man cannot perceive, nor discern the things of God, 1 Cor. 2. 14.

2U/c.

This may abate the pride of worldly wise men, though eminent in all naturall, and acquired abilities, who, like the proud Pharisee, boast of themselves and despise others, whose fruits are farre better then theirs; But know O vaine man, That not he that commendeth himselfe is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth; 2 Cor. 10. 18.

3U/c.

This is a ground of great comfort to every gracious heart, though they be never so meane and imperfect in gifts, and naturall endowments, yet their Graces may be eminent, and their fruits pretious. Though they be small as the poore widdowes mite, yet they are better, and of more esteeme with God, then all the great fruits of formall Professours, Mark; 12. 41, 42.

The three and fiftieth Observation in Nature.

THe thriving roote of a fruittree is alwaies ready to give up sap and nourishment to the Branches; and if the Branches, could draw sap continually, the roote would continually give it.

Proposition
Shadowed,

The Spirituall lesson shadowed.

That Christ is continually ready to communicate strength, and refreshing to his people, and all defects thereof are from themselves.

Believers receive all their life, and power from Christ whereby they doe any thing spirituall. And when the soule findeth not
strength,

strength, and refreshings by reason of the strings of *Corruptions*, and temptations from *sathan*, and the world, yet all the while *Christ* is ready to communicate himselfe, for it is his *Office*, as well as his *Nature*, he is appointed of *God* to give out all supplies to his people, *1 Cor. 1. 30.* He is made unto us *wisdom*, *righteousnesse*, *sanctification*, and *redemption*, The soule is sometimes sluggish, and carelesse of seeking, or entertaining *Christ*, yet *Christ* is ready, and calls for entrance, *Behold I stand at the dore and knock, if any man heare my voice, and open the dore, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me, Rev. 3. 20.* And againe *Cant. 5. 2, 3.* It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, open to me my love, my dove, my undefiled. But how carelesse is the soule of entertaining *Christ*: I have put off my Coate, how shall I put it on? &c.

The *Apostle* tels us the Lord is ready, *Jam. 4. 8.* draw nigh to *God*, and he will draw nigh to you, if we aske we shall receive, if we seek we shall find, if we knock it shall be opened, *Mat. 7. 7.* We find by experience, when we seek *Christ* diligently we find him refreshing the soule, quickning, and enlivening of it, but if we neglect him, our spirits are dull, our affections grow cold.

Christ is ready to give out himselfe to those that looke after him, at their first comming to him, and at all times afterward, *Job. 4. 47.* He that commeth unto me, I will in no wise cast off. He is the treasury of all grace, and dispenseth grace to his people for all purposes, quickning grace, strengthening grace, preventing grace, teaching grace, comforting grace, he is the *God* of all grace, and is still ready to communicate of the same to his people, if they be but ready, & fit to receive it.

It may hereupon be objected by some under a Temptation, *O* but I have prayed long, and sought the Lord, but I am not heard, I am almost discouraged in praying and waiting so long.

It is answered: The Cause is in thy selfe, upon one accompt, or other; It may be thou hast displeased *Christ* by some prevailing lust, it may be thou hast neglected, and slighted his grace, and loving kindnesse towards thee aforetime, not walking in any measure answerable thereunto, hast thou not looked after other lovers in letting the streame of thy affections runne towards empty crea-

Ob.

An.

tures: Or Christ may withhold, to prevent these things, or the like, which els would be, that thou knowing how dear it costs thee to obtaine manifestations of his grace, they may be the more prized. Or thy graces have need of *trying*, and *exercising*, which els being unactive, would be at a stand, or decay: there is some cause or other *in thy selfe*. If *need be*, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, 1 Pet. 1. 6. so that Christ is ready to communicate of his fulnesse to his people, and usually, the soule (being in a good healthy state, and not clouded with lusts, or temptations) seeking of him does find him, yea: before his people call he will *answere*, and while they are yet speaking he will *heare*, *Esay. 65. 24.*

1^ue.

Let this teach us to take notice of the freeness, and readinesse of Christ to communicate of his fulnesse, that our hearts may be engaged, and enlarged towards him in *love*, and *thankfulness*.

2^ue.

This is a singular encouragement to every beleiving soule continually to make out after Christ, in all our wants, and needs; for as he hath an infinite store, and treasury of all grace, so he is freely ready to dispence of it: Let us understand our own emptinesse, and insufficiency, that we may goe to him, and by faith receive of his fulnesse, *grace for grace*, even the same spirit, and same graces, that Christ hath in a measure.

The four and fiftieth Observation in Nature.

Fruit-trees being ordered with skill, and diligence, they become abundantly fruitfull, which if neglected, and nature be left to it selfe, they will beare but little fruit, or not so much, nor so good, as with due culture, and ordering.

This is another *Similitude*, of the state of Spirituall fruit-trees and shadowes out unto us this Proposition: That

Proposition
shadowed.

By diligent use of the meanes of grace Christians attaine great advantages, which through neglect, (or sleight using meanes) would be lost.

Whosoever

Whosoever proposeth an *End* unto himselfe cannot (rationally) expect to have it, without using *fit meanes* for attaining of it; *salvation* is that great, and generall *end* that men ayme at (at least pretend to it) but how can they expect to find it, who neglect, or sleight the *meanes*, whereby only it is attained: which is the knowledge of *Iesus Christ*?

Heaven is not gotten by sitting still, but by laboring and striving for it, in *Gods Way*; The kingdom of heaven is taken by violence, and the violent take it by force, *Mat. 11. 12. and Luk. 13. 24.* Strive to enter in at the strait gate. *Meanes* must be used with diligence; If we would have wisdom, we must ask it of God, *Iames 1. 5.* And *Pro. 22.* If he incline his care, and apply his heart to it, if he cry after knowledge, and lift up his voice for understanding, if he seeke her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures; then he shall understand the feare of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

Here must be inclining the eare, and applying the heart; here must be crying, and lifting up the voice, seeking, searching, and then shall wee find.

Giving all diligence, adde to your faith vertue &c. *2 Pet. 1. 5.* and againe *vers. 10.* Give all diligence to make your calling, and Election sure: the diligent soule shall be made fat *Prov. 13. 4.*

But on the other side, neglect of the *meanes* of grace, or carelesse use thereof, looseth these advantages, many seeke to enter, but shall not be able, some seeke not at all, others seeke but negligently, and so find not.

In attaining degrees of *Gifts*, and *Graces*, we see by Experience, that men of mean naturall parts, by diligence use of *meanes*, grow eminent, and farre beyond others who have better naturall parts, if they be negligent to improve them.

I know *meanes* are nothing of themselves, without the concurrence of the spirit in them; but as *meanes* without God can do nothing; so, usually, God without *meanes*, if men neglect them will do nothing: The diligent soule shall be made fat: *Prov. 13. 4* but such as neglect *meanes* or use them negligently, they loose all, and perish: The desire of the slothfull killeth him, *Prov. 21. 25.* My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I also will reject thee; *Hos. 4. 6.* they rejected knowledge, in rejecting,

and neglecting the waies and meanes of knowledg: ye have set at naught all my counsell, and would none of my reproofs: and vers. 29. they hated knowledg, they would none of my Counsell: that is: they neglected all: therefore God rejected them.

1 Use.

This shewes us the ignorance, and folly of those, who cast off Ordinances, and meanes of grace: though God hath commanded, and appointed them, as meanes of greatest advantage to his people.

2 Use.

This also informes us why there are so many ignorant, and fruitlesse persons in the world: even because they neglect, or carelesly use the meanes to know God.

3 Use.

Let us hence be stirred up to a diligent and constant use of the meanes of grace, not only as to the attayning of grace where it is not, but also to the increase of grace, where it is wrought, Especially in childhood and youth: I am perswaded not one of many would perish, if Parents, and such as have the education of youth (themselves being Godly) did use all good meanes diligently, for the working of grace in their hearts: Its true; the use of the best means will not be effectuell without the concurrence of the spirit of God, but where God gives an heart to go on in the use of meanes which he has appointed, he will surely come (in his owne season) and make it effectuell.

And for experienced well grown Christians, there is no meanes to obtaine great advantages, great measures of grace, and glory, like watching over the heart, to keepe it in a spirituall frame, corruptions downe, and the graces active, to walke closely with God daily in communion with him, to be still acting faith upon Christ, not only to receive, and draw all supplies from him, but also to give, and ascribe all unto him. These are fundamentall to all purposes: all externall meanes without these are to little or no purpose.

The five and fiftieth Observation in Nature.

IF a young Plant or bough of a tree, be often bended & bowed one and the same way, it will after a certaine time, grow in that posture, into which it is so often bended, although by the course of Nature it would grow otherwise.

This shadowes out unto us this Proposition: That
Frequent Acts in things good, or evil, beget habits, and make all Proposition
such works easy to us. shadowed,

Custom is cal'd a second Nature, it make things easy, though at first they were difficult, and such things are hardly forgotten, or laid aside; Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots, then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil? Jer. 13. 23.

The Apostle Peter saies they had their hearts, exercised with Covetous practises, so that they could not cease from sin 2 Pet. 2. 14.

So also on the other side: Custom in the waies of God does strengthen habits, and make them easy to us, not only upon that great accompt, of Communion With God in duties; but also every good worke is more easy to us in respect of use, and custome: The waies of God are naturalized to Gods people, by degrees, they become spiritually naturall to them. Dayly walking with God, and keeping the mind much in a spirituall frame, the soule will be more and more fix'd, and established in that frame: The frequent use of things Naturall, morall, or spirituall, will make them familiar to us, when the same things to others not accustomed to them, are uncouth, and strange.

Let every one beware what customes they use, especially if begun in youth: When an ill custome is spied out, either in the temper of the spirit, or outward man, its wisdom to oppose it, to alter it, as soone as may be, for every Act makes it more familiar, and habits will steale on, and be dayly confirmed. 17/6.

2 Use.

Professors had best consider, and beware from what Principles they Act; lest *Custom* be the strongest cord that drawes them. Many times when *Custom* has got strength, it resembles both *Nature*, and *Grace*.

3 Use.

Seeing *Custom* is so strong: This should teach all, as to beginne good *customs* in youth, as soone as possibly may be; so also to be frequent in good works, and waies of holinesse, that so by degrees *habits* may be confirmed, and such things made familiar to us.

And herein we should consider what things are of greatest concernment to us, and be most frequent therein.

Now Experienced Christians know, That watching over the heart, to keep downe Corruptions, or to suppress them at their first rising, And too keep the heart in a spirituall, and heavenly frame, and in Communion with God, is a fundamentall thing, and of highest concernement in our Conversion.

Therefore to be frequent in Prayer, Meditation, and other duties (wherein the spirit of God usually concurs) for keeping up of the heart with God, to live in God, to have fellowship and Communion with the father, and with his sonne Jesus Christ, is the wisdom of a Christian: the more pure the Fountaine is kept, the more pure all the streames will be: According to the temper of the spirit of a man, such are those things that proceed from it.

Use, and *Custom* in these things will make them more easy to us; for besides the immediate assistance, of the spirit, there is the power of *custome* superadded. All the *Actings* of *Grace* (as well as of *Nature*) are mightily confirmed, and improved by *Custom*.

The six and fiftieth Observation in Nature.

FRUIT trees having received some hurt (by men, Cattle, or otherwise) when the husbandman applies himselfe to cure such mischeifes,

cheifes (by his labours about the Roots, and Branches) such Trees usually are much advantaged thereby (to what they were before) and may be said to have gotten by their former hurts.

This shadowes out unto us this Proposition.

That afflictions, and whatsoever befalls the people of God; the same worke advantage to them.

Proposition
Shadowed.

Afflictions, and Temptations do not only not destroy us, but contrarywise (through the wisdom, power, and goodnesse of God in ordering them) they worke profit, and advantage to us. Though they are bitter, and tedious for a time, yet afterwards they bring the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby, Heb. 12. 11. And againe, 2 Cor. 4. 17. your light afflictions which are but for a moment, worke for you a farre more exceeding, and eternall weight of glory.

That great and generall promise, Rom. 8. 28. is full to this purpose, All things worke together for good to them that love God.

Yea, the advantage is usually in this life, as well as hereafter.

Joseph (an eminent fruit-tree) received much wrong, severall waies, but when the husbandman takes him in hand to heale, and cure him, he does not barely do it, but also advance him, he gets by his Banishment, and imprisonment.

So Daniel was not only delivered from the denne of Lions, but it was an occasion of his advancement, The like of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Dan. 2. 49.

Iob, a famous fruit-tree, having been broken, and bruised with enemies on every side, not a Branch free, yet when the husbandman sets upon his cure, he recovers him with an advantage, he gained by his losses.

David was even overwhelmed with troubles, but observe the issue, Psalm. 71. 20. Thou hast shewed me great and sore troubles, yet hast thou turned, and refreshed me, &c. Thou hast increased my greatnesse and comforted me on every side.

Yea, when the people of God declare their Experiments, we usually here them say, they have gotten by Afflictions.

sin the worst of evils, is (by the wisdom of God ordering it) an occasion of good to them, as humbling them more than all Afflictions.

And as Afflictions in generall worke good to the people of God, so the greatest worke the greatest advantages, 2 Cor. 1. 5. As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our Consolation also, aboundeth by Christ.

1 Use.

These things being so: let us be patient in Tribulation, Rom. 12. 12. This is a maine ground we should be so, in regard great and many advantages come by them. He correcteth us for our profit: Heb. 12. 10. that we might be partakers of his holiness.

Therefore let us joyne with God against our Corruptions, and if so, then we may count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations, James 1. 2.

2 Use.

Let these things teach us to admire the wisdom, care and goodness of God towards us, who makes the hardest things, the worst things that befall his people, to worke together for their good.

The seven and fiftieth Observation in Nature.

THe Husbandman makes use of ordinary, and common Toolles, and Instruments, about his chiefest works in his Garden, his knives, sawes, spades, and other instruments, are not of Gold, silver, or costly mettles, neither are they carved, or framed by any great Art, but they are plaine ordinary Instruments, which he makes use of to Engrasse his fruit-trees, and to doe his chiefest workes about them.

This shadowes out unto us, That

God (for the most part) useth meane and ordinary men, and means, for effecting of the greatest works in the world.

Proposition
shadowed.

What greater works do we reade of, than the deliverance of Israel out Egypt, by signes, and wonders, & their passage through the Red sea, and the barren wilderness, over Jordan, and their

their conquering great nations, and settlement in Canaan?

Now God did not use some great Monarch, as his Instrument, but Moses, who was cald from keeping sheepe, and made Instrumentall in many of these great works, and having done much, then Joshua (Moses his servant) he must doe the rest.

Gedeon, he was but of a poore family, and least in his Fathers house, Judg. 6. 15, being following a meane Imployment, threshing corne, when God cald him to make him generall of an Army, to worke a great deliverance for his people: which also was done by weak meanes; 300 men, Chap. 7. 7.

Elisba was taken from the Plow to be a great Prophet, 1 King. 19. 19.

David was following the sheep when God called him to be King over his people, and passed by Eliab his brother a more likely person. And also made use of this (small and meane Instrument) (by a poore slender meanes) to destroy Goliath, a great Giant, and consequently, a great army of the Philistins, 1 Sam. 16. 17.

Amos (a herdsman was called to be a Prophet, Chapt. 1. 1.

Shepherds were made use of, to reveale the most joyfull newes that ever was made knowen to the world; the birth of our Saviour, Luk. 2.

The Apostles, and many of the disciples of Christ, were meane persons, and cald from low employments, to follow the greatest worke in the world, to preach the Gospell.

They were not the learned Rabbies, nor Eloquent Oratours, nor the disputers of this world, as the Apostle speaks, 1 Cor. 1. but men of low Conditions, these were called to preach the Gospell, for the conversion of soules; Not with the inticing speech of mans wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power, 1 Cor. 2. 4. Not with wisdom of words, lest the crosse of Christ should be made of none effect, 1 Cor. 1. 17.

God is pleased to effect this, and other his greatest works in the world, by meane Instruments, and meanes, that his owne power may be the more seene in them; for if the greatest, and most likely Instruments, in the judgment of men, were employed in the greatest works, they would take all (or most of) the honour to themselves,

selves, and others would give it them. So God should loose his honour. Yea, God hath destroyed, and will destroy the wisdom of this world, by those persons and things, that the word accompts foolish, 1 Cor. 1. 27. *God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty things, vers. 28. And vile things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.*

As God hath done, so he will do still great works in the world, by meane, and low Instruments and meanes: he hath great, and mighty works to bring to passe in the Nations, in bringing them into subjection to our Lord Christ. He will destroy Antichrist, even all that oppose him, he will leuell the Mountaines, and enlarg the kingdom of his deare sonne, and set up his Throne, and put the scepter into his hand to rule the people who have beene disobedient, he will build his holy City Jerusalem, and make it a praise in the Earth.

And now: How will God doe these great things? what Instruments will he use? will he use altogether Golden instruments, carved, and polished by art, the most eminent men, & of highest Place & Esteeme in the world? Surely no: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the things that are mighty, &c. 1 Cor. 1. 27. That is; persons, and things which carnall wise men, in their Judgment accompt weak and foolish, although in the Judgment of God they are otherwise esteemed: for the weaknesse, and foolishnesse of God, and of his people (as men count weaknesse, and foolishnesse) are stronger, and wiser, than the strength, and wisdom of the world, vers. 25.

A worme shall thresh the mountaines, and beate them small as Chaffe. Esay. 41. 14. 15. Surely, a worme must be in the hand of some mighty one, to be enabled to doe such great things.

Hath not God already done great things in our daies, even before our eyes, by Instruments and meanes (time was) very unlikely, and of small accompt with the carnall world? have not weak Instruments, and meanes beene like the Cloud that Eliah's servant saw rise out of the sea, at first no bigger then a mans hand, but

but afterwards it covered the whole heavens?

Have not Princes, Lords, and the mightiest men both in Church, and state, yea whole Nations, have they not been subdued by a hand full of men, whom their adversaries slighted: as Goliath did David, saying in themselves, and one to another, we shall presently swallow them up: Do not all the Trees of the field know, that the Lord hath brought downe the high tree, and exalted the low Tree, hath dried up the greene tree, and made the dry tree to flourish? Ezek. 17. 24.

Many Instances (were it convenient) might be brought of men, and meanes, whose beginnings were but weake, and small whereby God hath brought to passe great, and mighty works.

Beware of despising meane Instruments, and weake meanes which Use? God for the most part makes use of, for bringing to passe great things. Despise not the day of small things, Ezek. 4. 10. for God will build Ierusalem not by might, nor by power, but by his spirit. Meane and low Instruments shall be stirred up by his spirit, and shall do his great works in the world. And these Instruments shall be sure to have the men of the world, with their wisdom, to slight and despise them, as Sanballat, and Tobia did the Jewes, Nehe. 4. 1, 2, 3. what do these feeble Jewes, &c? Even that which they build, if a fox goe up, he shall even breake downe their stone wall. And one reason is (besides the disagreement of flesh and spirit) because the wisdom, and strength, and glory of the people of God, is veiled under a low, and meane Condition in the world. And though by their wisdom they deliver a city, or do some great works, yet Eccl. 9. 16. the poore mans wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.

Upon the same account the wisdom, and works of our Saviour were slighted, and neglected, though he did works as never any did, and spake as never man spake, Matth. 13. 55. Is not this the Carpenters sonne? vers. 57. They were offended in him. Even so it is now with his Members.

But who art thou, O man! that replyest against God, in despising, and quarrelling with meane Instruments? What if God willing to shew his power, and wisdom in weake Instruments, and meanes, lay aside, or let alone, more eminent instruments, and more

likely meanes: wilt thou not give him leave to do what he will with his owne? is thine eye evill, because he is good? Hath he not said, *the weak things of the world shall confound the mighty?* hath he said it, and shall he not do it yea, he hath said it, and done it, and he will doe it, untill he performe all his pleasure, and those that oppose him shall be ashamed.

The eight and fiftieth Observation in Nature.

THough there are many good fruits in an Orchard, yet some are more choice and speciall fruits than some others, and accordingly are of greater price, and esteeme among men.

This Similitude shadowes out unto us this Proposition:
That

Proposition shadowed,
The Prayers, Sermons, writings, discourse, and works of some godly men, are much more spirituall then of some others.

Gods people are of severall standings, and degrees of grace, some have *small measures*, some *greater measures* of grace, some are but *babes in Christ*, others are *strong men*, some *fathers*, 1 Joh. 2. 12. 13. some have their conversations much in heaven, their spirits are much taken up about spirituall things, they walke closely with God, and have neere, and sweete Communion with God: they are little conversant with the things below. but are most taken up with God, and the things of God; But now others (though godly persons) walke at a greater distance from God, and therefore have lesse of his Image, they are *lesse changed* than others: As the Apostle saies of *Bodies*, 1 Cor. 15. 40. *There are Celestiall bodies, and bodies Terrestiall*, so it may be said of the *Spirits*, even of such as are Godly; some have their minds much in heaven, by keeping watch over their hearts, and walking in daily communion with God, others though they have the life of grace in them, yet it is very weak, and feeble, they are very much *carnall*, and *earthly*. Oh! there is much difference betweene the
spirits,

Spirits, and lives, of some beleivers and some others: some are filled with the spirit, as Stephen, *Act. 6. 5. A man full of faith*, and of the holy Ghost, others have but small measures of the spirit, and their faith and other graces, are but weake, and slender: *Mat. 16. 8. O ye of little faith.*

And now, according to the *measure, and degrees of grace, holinesse, or Image of God* in believers, are all those things that proceede from them; they are more or lesse spirituall. As according to the *Forme, and Nature that is in the Materiall fruit-tree*, such are the fruits, that it beares; And thence it is that some have better fruits then some others. According to the *spring, or fountaine, such are the streames.*

Let this stirre us up to strive, and labour after *higher, and greater degrees of grace*, and to keepe it active, by *constant, and close walking with God*, that so all that proceedeth from us may be accordingly spirituall. Hereby will be unspeakable advantages to us: The more holy, and spirituall any soule is, the more God delights in it, and communicates himselfe to it, And of higher account all the fruits of such a soule are, both with God, and his people that are most spirituall.

The spirituall man judgeth all things, he hath a *spirituall eye*, and a *spirituall Palate* to tast spirituall fruits, of what relish they are, and according to their spiritualnesse he prizeth them, if his owne spirit be in a spirituall frame.

The husbandman prizeth a *few choice, and speciall apples*, or other fruits, more than a *Busshell of ordinary kinds*: Accordingly does the Mysticall husbandman account of spirituall fruits, and so should we.

The nine and fiftieth Observation in Nature.

I*ngrafted fruit-trees have three great enemies, one from within, and two from without; first, the sower sap of the stock, secondly, carelesse persons, thirdly, bad aires.*

This shadowes out unto us: That

Regenerate persons have three great enemies, one inward, & two outward, the flesh, the world, and the devill. *Though shadowed.*

Though there are very many pregnant *Similitudes* between *Materiall*, and *Mysticall Fruit-trees*, yet in this particular, there is a great *dissimilitude*. That is, the *stock* of the *Materiall fruit-tree* is by Nature wild, *sower*, *harsh*, and of a *bad sap* (a *Crab-tree* or the like) but the *Graft* is of a good Nature, taken from some choice and speciall tree, which being grafted upon a stock of a worse kind, although it be predominant and rule in bringing forth good fruits, according to its owne Nature, yet it is something imbas'd, and made worse by the badnesse of the stock.

Now it is contrary in the *Mysticall fruit-tree*: There the

*This is so when a *believer* is ingrafted into *Christ*; but when the *word* is ingrafted into the *heart*, then the *Similitude* holds in this particular also, in that (as in the naturall fruit-tree) the *stock* is *bad*, and the *graft* *good*. The heart of man is altogether corrupt by nature, but the *word*, and *seed of grace*, engrafted, and sown in the *heart*, is perfectly good, and precious.

* *stock* is perfectly good, and precious, and the *Grafts* corrupt, and naught; Yet in these maine, and principall respects (as in many others) the *Similitude* holds, in that the graft receives all its nourishment from the stock, and in that there are two *Natures*

both in *Materiall*, and *Mysticall fruit-trees* (in the *stock*, and *Graft*) and both strive one with the other, as all contraries (joyned) doe.

This being premised, I proceede with the *Proposition*.

One of our great enemies is the *flesh*, or *Corruption of Nature*, this is our greatest enemy, and does us most mischeife, *Rom. 7. 21. I find a law, that when I would do good, evill is present with me, Gal. 5. 17. the flesh lusteth against the spirit, &c.*

Secondly, the world by its *Commands*, *threats*, *persecutions*, *Counsell*, *Perswasions*, *Allurements*, and *Examples*, is laboring to draw us from God, *Job. 15. 19. and 1 Job. 2. 16.*

Thirdly, the devill like a roaring *Lyon* goes about seeking whom he may devour, *Pet. 9. 8.*

Hence we may see the grosse mistake of those who thinke, and say, they are free from *Corruption*, which Paul complained of, *Rom. 7. 17. Sin dwelleth in me, and vers. 24. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?*

I am perswaded the more spirituall any Christians are, the more

more clearly they see their *Corruptions*, although they are weaker in such than in others. *Atoms*, or *Motes* appeare in the Beames of the sunne, but not in a dimme light.

Seeing we have *three great enemies* to encounter with, this should make us to put on the whole Armour of God, and to stand upon our Guard, and watch against them.

2 Use.

The sixtieth Observation in Nature.

GRafts before they are joyned to the stock, must endure (ordinarily) many difficulties, under the hand of the Husbandman, as cutting off from the Tree, lying by for a time (it may be severall weeks, or months) after that, cutting to the pith, or heart with a sharp knife, &c.

See Observ.

This is another *Similitude* of the state of *Mysticall Fruit-trees*, and shadowes out unto us this Proposition.

That the people of God in their Conversion (for the most part) go through many straights, and difficulties. Proposition

shadowed.

Those whom God intends to Ingraft into Christ, the spirit first convinceth them of sin, he inlighens their understandings to see where (and in what case) they are by Nature, and of their utter inability to help themselves out of it: And by degrees cuts them off from all things in themselves; Their *Reason, wisdom, skill, Learning, Gifts, all their duties, and performances, all their own righteousness, all put together*, is but as vanity and emptinesse, theres nothing in any thing of their own to help them, or do them good, so that the spirit becomes a spirit of bondage to them for a time, letting them see nothing but terror, and sad sights, *A strict Law, or Covenant of works* binding them over to Justice and wrath, eternall death.

So that hereby they are cut to the heart, and are put upon enquiring, and seeking which way to get out of this Case, *Acts 2. 37. what shall we doe?*

Some are kept longer under feares and terrors, and are cast lower than others, they are brought in such a condition, as that they will be glad to receive Christ upon any Conditions;

Q

then

then the spirit of God opens their eyes to see a way out of their miseries, then he holds forth Christ unto them in the tenders of the Gospell, Oh how glad is such a soule to receive Christ upon any terms, upon any termes in the world! Then the soule longs, and hungers, and thirsts to be satisfied with Christ, and accompts all things but as dung and drossie in comparison of him. Then the spirit of God leads the soule (as by the hand) to lay hold upon Christ, to close with him, and by little, and little works a perswasion in the heart that Christ is his, and that he is Christs, upon the Accompt of that *new, pretious, sure Covenant of grace*; in which are all the glorious sweet promises of the Gospell included.

I Use.

Let *Professours* try themselves whether ever they found the case to be thus with them, before they had a perswasion of the love of God, least they deceive themselves. Many build their house upon the sands, against which when the Raine, and the winds, and floods beate (when Temptations arise) it will fall, *Mat. 7. 27.*

Yet it is not with all alike in their coming to Christ, some close with him upon easier terms than some others; howsoever in all that come to Christ, there must be a sense, and sight of their misery by sin (as they are under the *Covenant of works*) and their great neede of Christ to deliver them from it, and thereupon a desire to rest upon him by faith, for Justification, and acceptance with God through him. Of this see more at large, *Observation in Nature 25.*

The one and sixtieth Observation in Nature.

THe Husbandman (upon occasion) praises, and commends his fruit-trees, when they beare many, and good fruits; some for one property, and some for another.

*Proposition
shadowed.*

This shadowes out to us, That

When the people of God bring forth good fruits, God himselfe doth praise and commend them.

The Lord takes pleasure in his people, passing by their infirmities

firmities, and taking notice of what is good in them.

It was a very high commendation that God gave of Abraham, Gen. 18. 19. *I know him that he will command his Children, and his household after him, and they shall keepe the Way of the Lord.*

God tooke notice of the good fruits that Phynchas brought forth, and commends him, and rewards him, (Numb. 15. 11. 12. &c.) in that he was zealous for his God. He said of David, *That he was a man after his owne heart.* So of Moses, Num. 12. 7. *My servant Moses is faithfull in all mine house.* And Nathaniel Joh. 1. 47. *Behold an Israelite indeede, in whom there is no guile.*

Particulars neede not be multiplied: one or two scriptures may serve for more, Rom. 2. 29. *Their praise is not of men, but of God:* and 2 Cor. 10. 18. *Not he that commendeth himselfe, is approved, but he that the Lord commendeth.*

This is much for the comfort, and encouragement of all that are upright in heart, God will commend such: Though it may be their fruits are none of the fairest on the outside in the eyes of men, they have not bulke, nor shape, nor colour to commend them unto men, yet being well tasted savoury fruits, having the Relish of truth, sincerity, Love, and right ends, the husbandman likes them well, and will commend them even before men and Angels, Matth. 25. 24. *Well done thou good and faithfull servant, thou hast beene faithfull over a few things &c. enter thou into the joy of thy Lord, so againe ver. 23.*

Use.

The two and sixtieth Observation in Nature.

THere is a great change wrought upon fruit-trees by Engrafting: Before they brought forth sower and naughy fruits, but now pleasant. See Observ. 43. and 60.

This is another Similitude &c. and shadows out unto us this Proposition.

That persons by Regeneration have a great Change wrought in them. Proposition shadowed.

All by Nature bring forth bitter and naughty fruits, *sower Grapes, Grapes of Gall, their clusters are bitter*: And there is noe way possibly to bring them to beare good fruits, but by engrafting them into *Iesus Christ*.

Now *Regeneration*, or implanting into *Christ*, works a great change throughout the whole man, upon all the faculties of the soule, and in *Conuersation*. The understanding which before was darke, and ignorant of spirituall things, then becomes (by little, and little) *inlightened*, and apprehensive of spirituall things, *Heb. 10. 32. after ye were illuminated &c*: The will which before was *crossed* and *stubborne*, opposing the will of God, becomes (in some measure) obedient, and inclining to what is of God; and to affect spirituall things, as *spirituall*, for themselves.

The *affections*, which (before implanting into *Christ*) were cold, and dead towards *Christ*, and the things of God, then have heat and life in them, they sitte and move after spirituall things.

Unregenerate persons cannot see, nor judge of spirituall things, no more than of visible outward objects without *light*, but when the worke of grace comes into the soule, then *light* shines there, *Ephes. 5. 8. Ye were sometimes darknesse, but are now light in the Lord: so 2 Cor. 4. 6.*

By this *Ingrafting* there is a *Transforming*; a change of the *Mind*, *Rom. 12. 2. be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind*; there is a new heart, and a new spirit, *Ezek. 36. 26.*

Use.

This being so, it concernes us seriously to consider, upon what grounds we build our hopes of eternall life, for except this Change be wrought, except a man be borne againe, he cannot see the kingdome of God, *John 3. 3. what ever we do let us give all diligence to make our calling, and Election sure*: Many deceive themselves: O what a sad thing is it to be mistaken in this great, and most concerning *businessse*, whereon depends our Eternall welfare! There is no salvation out of *Christ*, and if any man be in *Christ* he is a new Creature, *2 Cor. 5. 17.* There are new Principles, and dispositions in the soule, contrary to those of *Corrupt Nature*: consider it seriously; and give all diligence to make your calling and Election sure.

The

The fixtie third Observation in Nature.

OF one matter or substance in trees are made severall distinct substances, Of the sap in Fruit-trees are framed the Bark, wood, Pith, Leaves, Buds, Blossoms, stalks, fruits, and seed: all of them distinct, and of divers Natures, & yet formed by one and the same spirit, and sap, arising from the roote of the tree.

This Similitude shadowes out unto us, That
The severall Gifts and Graces in believers, are wrought by the same spirit.

Proposition
shadowed.

Gifts and Graces in the people of God differ not only in degrees, but also in Nature, and kind (as they are distinct Gifts and Graces) yet all of them framed by the spirit of God, for the edifying, and building up of his Church.

Some excell in Gifts, yet are but low in Graces, some others are weake in Gifts, but strong in Graces: They have a strong faith, a fervent love, much humility, invincible courage, and zeale, and would sooner suffer for Christ, than some others who excell in Gifts.

These things the Apostle shewes at large, 1 Cor. 12. 14. Now there are diversities of Gifts but the same spirit, and there are diversities of administrations but the same Lord, and diversities of operations, but the same God who worketh all in all.

And as in the Materiall fruit-tree all the severall and distinct substances mutually concurre (according to the Law of Nature) to the increase, and making up of a faire, and comly fruit-tree, not only for the profit of the Husbandman, but also for the increate, & multiplying of the same species, or kind, so likewise do all the severall Gifts and Graces in believers (wrought by the same spirit) serve mutually as well for the enlarging and multiplying the branches of the Vine-tree, the Church of God, as the honour of the Husbandman that planted it.

This points out whither we should go for Gifts, and Graces, and the increase of them, Jam. 1. 5. 17. they come downe from the father of lights.

1 Use.

2 Use.

Stronger Christians ought not to despise, or neglect the lowest gifts and graces in their brethren, because they are the same in kind with theirs, and from the same spirit.

3 Use.

From hence the weakest believers may take comfort, they have the same spirit dwelling in them, as the strongest Members, yea, the same spirit that is in the head, who in due time will draw all of them to himselfe.

The four and sixtieth Observation in Nature.

There are very many Profits, and pleasures found in the Husbandmans Garden of fruit-trees both to himselfe and others: fruit-trees bring many Profits to a mans estate, Profits to his body, to his Mind, to his name; And there are Pleasures to all the senses: He also invites, and bids his freinds welcome into his Garden, and makes them partakers with him of his Profits and pleasures.

This is another Similitude and shadowes out unto us this Proposition, That

Proposition
shadowed.

There are exceeding many and great Profits, and pleasures found in the Church of God.

The Church is compared to a Vineyard, wherein are many choice plants, E/ay. 5.1.2. &c. It is called an Orchard, and Garden of Fruit-trees, Cant. 4 12.13. A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse, thy plants are an Orchard of Pomegranates with pleasant fruits.

Mr Bolton.

Now as in Vineyards, Orchards, Gardens, &c. (which are, as a holy man saies, as the starrs, and Paradises of the Earth) there are many Profits, and Pleasures found, so are there likewise in the Church of God.

There are Profits to all purposes, 1 Tim. 4.8. Godliness is Profitable to all things, againe, Rev. 3. 18. I Councell thee to buy of me gold, that thou maist be rich. The people of God are made rich by Christ, so that they lay up Treasures, they have a treasure in their hearts, Matth. 12.35, and treasures in heavens Matth. 6. 20. God is their father, and all his Attributes are laid out for them; They have an inheritance immortall, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them.

They

They have infinite treasures, because Christ is theirs, and all his fulnesse.

And as there are these Profits found in the Garden of fruit-trees, the Church of God, so also there are Pleasures in abundance: all her waies are waies of pleasantnesse, Prov. 3. 17. As the husbandman invites his freinds into his fruit-garden, to eat of his fruits, and drink of his wines made of them, and to partake of all his Pleasures there; so does the Mystlicall Husbandman invite his freinds to partake of the delights that are in his Garden, Cant. 5. 1. *I am come into my garden my sister, my spouse, I have gathered my mirrhe With my spice: I have eaten my hony combe With my hony, I have drunk my wine. With my milke-Eat O freinds, drinke, yea drinke abundantly O beloved!*

And as we sit in Arbours, and under the shade of trees in Gardens in sommer season, and eat pleasant fruits and drinke wines made of them: such delights also are in this Mystlicall Garden, Cant. 2. 3. *As the Appletree among the trees of the Wood, so is my beloved among the sonnes. I sat downe under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweete to my tast.* vers. 4. *He brought me into the Banqueting house. And in the banqueting house there are pleasant wines, to cheare, & refresh the heart, mixed wines* Prov. 9. 2. *Wine of the Pomegranate, Can. 8. 2. I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juyce of my Pomegranate.* There is both feasting, and Banqueting in this Garden of fruit-trees, Esay. 25. 6. *A feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the Lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the Lees well refined.* There is variety of all dainties, and free welcome, they need not spare: the Master of the feast saies freely from his heart: *Eat O freinds, drink, yea drink abundantly O beloved* Cant. 5.

So then we see, there are variety and abundance of Profits, and Pleasures in the Church of God.

This therefore may be improved for the invitation and encouragement of those that are yet out of this inclosed Garden to enter into it, those that did never yet feast nor banquet with Christ there, nor so much as tast of any of his delicates. O let them all take notice of these things, and consider where they are, and what they are a doing. They are now in a dry and barren wilderness, where there is a dearth, a scarcity and want of

1 Use.

of all *profitable*, and *pleasant* things, they are now with the prodigall feeding swine, and grasping *empty husks* to satistie themselves, being ready to famish for want of foode, while they might have bread enough, and the *fatted Calfe* to feed upon: if they will come into this *pleasant Garden*, there they shall have a *feast of fat things, of wine on the lees well refined.*

They shall have all that their hearts can desire, *Psal. 37-5.* they shall have joy, and peace, and full satisfactions, there they shall have Christ, and all his fulnesse made theirs: there they shall have God for their Portion, in whom they shall find infinitely more happinesse, and satisfaction, than in all the Creatures both in heaven and earth. Therefore come into this *Garden, now, even now*, while it is called to day, and be partakers of the *Profits, and pleasures* of it.

2^d Use.

Let all those who dwell in this *Garden inclosed*, and are partakers of all these great priviledges, consider, and admire the abundant love, and kindnesse of God towards them, and walke in some measure answerable thereunto. There are some of the freinds of Christ with whom he feasts, and banquets frequently: letting them find the powerfull workings of his Spirit, establishing, and refreshing their spirits, in many discoveries of his love to them, assurance of the pardon of sin, freedome from Hell, Sathan, the condemning power of the *Law, or Covenant of works, &c.* discovering to them, that all the waies and proceedings of his providences towards them are in *Wisdom, Love, and Mercy*, to the increase of grace here, and to fit them for glory hereafter, his Spirit witnessing, and sealing unto them the unchangeable love of God in Christ, in the *Covenant of free grace*, whereby they have an habitual, and well grounded assurance of their present state of happinesse, and of their perseverance in it unto the end; And then an exaltation unto infinite glory, unto all Eternity.

These, and such like, are the *dishes and dainties* in the *Feasts, and Banquets* that are found in this *Garden inclosed the Church of God.*

The sixtie fifth Observation in Nature.

THe husbandman does carefully fence his Orchard, or Garden of fruit-trees round about, he makes a Wall, Pale, hedg, ditch or some fence or other on every side of his Garden, that no Cattle, nor any other enemies may annoy, or hurt it.

This shadowes out unto us: That

The Church of God is encompassed, and preserved by God himselfe. Proposition shadowed.

The Prophet *Esay* speaking of the Lords Vineyard, Chap. 5. 2. saies: He fenced it, or (as it is in the Margent) he made a Wall about it, that is: he himselfe is about it, *Psal.* 125. 2. As the hills are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about his people, from henceforth even for ever.

All the Attributes of God are for the safety, and preservation of his people, *Pf.* 5. 12. With favour shalt thou compass him, as with a shield: so of his power, wisdom, faithfulness &c. This was the hedg that Sathan saw was about *Job.* chap. 1. 10. Hast not thou made an hedg about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? *2 Ki.* 6. 17. There were Charets, and horses round about *Elisha*: which were Angels, for the preservation of *Elisha*: as the Prophet hath it *Psal.* 68. 17. the Charets of God are 20000 even thousands of Angels: so the Angels are still ministering spirits to all the faithfull. God gives them a charge to keep his people in all their waies, *Psal.* 91. 11.

The Church of God is called a Garden, a garden compassed, and fenced; *Cant.* 4. 12. a Garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse.

This is sound, and unspeakable consolation to all that feare God, The Power, wisdom, Love, Mercy, faithfulness of God, even God himselfe compasseth them round about: they dwell in God, *Joh.* 17. 21. and *1 Joh.* 4. 16. who, or what then can hurt them, or prevaile against them? Souldiers within a strong impregnable Garrison, neede not feare a besieging enemy, if they have all things necessary, and convenient for them there, so the people of God

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dwell

I Use.

dwell in God in whom is all fulnesse, *Esay. 33. 16.* He shall dwell on high, his place of defence shall be the munition of Rocks: bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure: see here the safety of such as feare God: The Tower wherein they are, is so high that no enemy can possibly scale it, neither can they undermine it, it is built upon a Rock or Rocks, and they have provision enough within, bread and water, by which is understood all the fulnesse of God, given out both in temporals and spirituals: so that the Gates of hell (all the powers of men, and devills combining together against them) shall not prevaile over them: nay their enemies shall be destroyed in their attempts: for God is a Wall of fire round about his people, *Zeck. 2. 5.* and a consuming fire, *Heb. 12. 29.* all the enemies of God, and of his people shall be consumed by it.

So then; we see the safety and happinesse of all the trees of Gods inclosed Garden, they are implanted into Christ, they are inclosed and compassed by God himselfe, they shall be preserved from all evill, and shall want no manner of thing that is good.

All the Attributes of God, even God himselfe, is a Brazen Wall, a Wall of fire, compassing them round about; so that nothing shall hurt them. And although their enemies (sometimes) may kill them, yet they cannot hurt them: Though (possibly) they may loose their heads, yet they shall not loose an haire of their head, *Luk 21. 16, 17, 18.* Their losse for Christ is gaine.

The sixty sixt Observation in Nature.

When the husbandman dresseth up his Orchard or Garden, and removes such trees, and plants as are barren, and unfruitfull, or that bear naughty fruits, and plants others in their roomes: that are choice and speciall trees, and gathers out the stones, weeds, rubbish, and whatsoever is offensive, and bestowes much time, cost and labour, in preparing and ordering all things in his Garden for his profit, and delight, men may judg (by all these things) that he intends to come settle himselfe, and dwell there.

Proposition
shadowed.

This shadowes out unto us, That

When God doth purg a Nation, or place from persons, and things
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that are offensive to him, and brings in his owne people, and worship in stead thereof, this is an evident token that God intends to dwell there.

God is infinite, and is not included in one place more than another; The Heaven of heavens cannot containe him; 2 Chro. 6. 18. yet he is said to dwell in some places rather than in others, by speciall manifestations of his love and goodnesse there, more than in other places: When God purposed to make the Land of Canaan his dwelling place, he cast out the inhabitants of the Land, and planted his own people, and his worship there: as we see at large in the History. This Moses foretold, Exod. 15. 17. *Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them, in the mountaine of thine inheritance, in the place O Lord which thou hast made for thee to dwell in: and Exod. 29. 45. I will dwell amongst the children of Israel, and will be their God.*

When God had Mercy on Israel (after a long time of trouble, and desolation) and comes to dwell among them againe, then he brings downe, and casts out their enemies, and oppressors, and gives his owne people authority, and power over them, as we see Esay. 14. 2. *They shall take them Captives whose Captives they were, and they shall rule over their oppressors. It is God that putteth down one, and setteth up another, Psal. 75. 7. I the Lord have brought down the high tree, and exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and made the dry tree to flourish, I the Lord have spoken it, and have done it, Ezk. 17. 20. when God roots up, or cuts down high, green, flourishing trees, but barren of good fruits, and plants choice trees in their stead, though low, and despised in the eyes of the world, this is, that he may dwell among them, and walke among them 2 Cor. 6. 16. he sets his Tabernacle there, Levit. 23. 12. and takes pleasure in them, Ps. 149 4. for the Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation: and saith, This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein, Ps. 132. 13, 14.*

This being so, that when God beignes to reforme a Nation, or place, its a signe he intends, to dwell there; this is a ground of great consolation to the people of God in England, and other parts, where God hath begun his great worke of Reformation (notwithstanding many things are yet amisse) but especially to some particular places, where more remarkable evidences of his presence are

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*Universities
and some other
places.

manifest in removing fruitlesse, & unprofitable Trees, and planting in their stead many fruitful trees, not only in a private capacity, but also in a Publique, many godly Magistrates, for the execution of Justice, and taking part with those that fear God, in stead of curbing, and discouraging of them in well doing.

And also in respect of many faithfull ministers of the Gospell, who preach Jesus Christ, and declare the glorious mysteries of the Gospell in stead of blockish ignorance, or els daubing with untempered mortar: Though all are not thus through the Nation, yet it may be so said of many more now than in former times.

Are not such as are put in Authority, and Power in the Nation, of the best men is not the Magistracy of the Land of choice Persons, (such as are most fit, and capable) of the godly party? at least, it is the endeavour of those in supream power, that it may be so. And as for the Ministry of the Nation, though it have beene (in the generall) very corrupt, & is so still in many places; yet hath there not been in this a great reformation of late yeares, which is still going on among us?

And as the Magistracy, and Ministry of the Land, are much changed, and reformed, so also are * Military

* By whom God hath wrought of late yeares, even wonders in these three Nations; Not to be paraleld in any Histories of former ages, unlesse by the Wars of Canaan. God hath eminently, & most remarkably appeared for us, and that in a course & series of his providences; not only in the sight of his people, but even the enemies themselves being Judges. men; heretofore in corrupt times, the souldiery were of the worst of men, the most notorious, desperatly wicked men under the sun: whereas now they are of the best men fearing God, very many of them: not only Commanders, and Officers, but also common souldiers have been, and are men of faith, & prayer, as well as courage: such as the good souldier the Centurion was, mentioned

Matt. 8. 5. whom Christ himself commended: and as Cornelius, another Centurion of a band, of whom it is said, that he was a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, Act. 10. 2.

And as the Magistracy, Ministry, & Souldiery are very much reformed, & good men amongst them all are set up, & encouraged, and evill men removed, & discouraged; so also persons fearing God of all ranks, and conditions are countenanced by the Authority of the Nation: having liberty, & freedome in the worke of the Lord, whereby the Gospell, & the kingdome of Christ, is enlarged, notwithstanding all opposition, or any thing that is yet amiss among us.

Are not all these things evidences of Gods presence among us, that

that he is a coming neerer to us, that the husbandman intends to dwell, and delight himselfe in his Garden, where he is thus at worke so remarkably? Rejoice therefore, and let all the Trees of the feild clap their hands: for in stead of the Thorne is come up the fir-tree, and in stead of the Brier is come up the Mirtle tree, *Esay. 55. 12. 13.* Solomon saies; When the righteous are in Authority the people rejoice, *Prov. 29. 2.* Certainly such as feare God do so. And this (by the way) may serve for a tryall, and touchstone of mens spirituall estates; whether they are in the flesh, or in the spirit.

But it may be Objected: Do we not see rather signes of Gods departure from us, than of his coming neerer to us? for do we not see Errors, Heresies, and Blasphemies abound among us, divisions and contentions in every place? Ob.

It is answered: do we not also see the Truths of the Gospel more fully, and generally manifested and known, than they have been formerly? the Kingdome of Christ is enlarged, and growes daily. There are more Professors of Religion in these daies, than in former times; Not only Professors in Hypocrisy, but also in truth, and sincerity. And as Errors, and Heresies are more awakened, so also are the Truths of God more cleared; and its certaine, Truth will at length prevaile, & silence Error: Truth will suppress Errors, & devour them, as Aarons Rod did the Rods of the Magicians of Egypt, *Exo. 7. 12.* Answ.

And as for divisions and contentions among us, let none think that strange; for where Christ comes to take possession of a Nation, or City, or Family, where he was not before, there will certainly be divisions: *Matth. 10. 34. 35.* Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her Mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law &c. Flesh, and spirit, even in, and amongst the people of God, will oppose each other; there will be divisions amongst Gods own people upon this accompt (they seeing but in part, and with different degrees of light) as well as between them, and carnall persons. Where the spirit of God in any of his people strikes at the Corruptions of others, in any respect; where their Names, interests, and concernments are toucht, this occasions divisions, and contentions: All which, God will by his wisdom, power, and goodnesse, over rule, and order for the good of his people, making them

2Use.

to sift, and try things more thoroughly, that so thereby both *truth*, and *Error*, may be more manifest.

Also many things which some godly men have heretofore caled *Errors*, they afterwards (upon examination, and a more full discovery of them) imbraced for *Truths*, and many things which good men in former ages never saw, nor understood, are now made manifest, and evident to be the *Truths of God*: the *Spirit of God* in these *Gospell daies*, being (according to his promise) powred out more abundantly, *light is more cleare* than heretofore, and consequently things hid in darknesse, *mysteries of the Gospell*, are more discovered: Though the day, as yet, as to many things, is not cleare, nor dark, but it shall come to passe that at evening it shall be light, *Zech. 14. 6, 7.* And the light of the Moon shall be as the light of the sunne, and the light of the sun shall be seaven fold, *Esay. 30. 26.*

And further; In answer to the former *Objection*: Though some among us have feares and doubts of Gods departure from us, yet if they do but consider all things well (weighing one thing against another, and looke upon them with a spirituall eye, not dimmed with *selfish, worldly interests*, they shall then see many more, and more evident tokens of Gods drawing neerer to us in these Nations, and of his abiding with us, than of his departing from us: which ought to be observed, and thankfully acknowledged by all, as it is by many of his choicest servants. For certainly, were there the contrary to what we see, and have of late yeares seene, among us, then we should, and we might indeed accompt them *fatall signes of Gods departing from us*: should we see wicked men governe, and have the *supream power in these Nations*; to be chosen, and *Commissionated* in all the great affaires, and concernments among the people; should we see the people of God discountenanced, curbed and restrained in every place, and the wicked encouraged, and upheld; should we see the *choicest ministers of the Gospell*, and the *most eminent holy men of all ranks*, imprisoned and persecuted by all the powers of the Nation, as they have been heretofore; should we see and behold all the *dispensations of God* towards us, to be a weakning the hands of his people, and giving strength, and rule into the hands of *evill men*: then indeed we might have cause to feare, that God had surely a great controversy with us, and a departing from us; but now while we behold

behold the *contrary* to all these things, why may we not conclude, and expect the *contrary*?

We should make such a conclusion as *Manoahs* wife did, when she had seene, and observed *many evidences* of Gods favour towards her her husband, and her selfe (when he, who should have taught her, had groundlesse feates, *Judges* 13.23. *If the Lord would have destroyed us, he would not have done all these things for us.*

So; though we are indeed a sinfull people, worthy to be destroyed, yet God having given us *so many, so great, and so wonderful evidences* of his grace, and favour, and of his *comming to dwell among us*, we ought to observe them, and thankfully to acknowledge them, with a full confidence that God will *abide with us*, and no more depart from us.

There is a time, and that at hand, when the *Church of God* shall be so free from the power of *Antichrist*, as never to be any more subject to him: God will make his Church an *eternall excellency*, and the *daies of her mourning shall be ended.* *Esay* 60. 15, 20, and *Esay* 62. 4. According to the *Prophecy* in *Dan.* 7. 22. *The time came that the Saints possessed the Kingdom:* and *Rev.* 5. 10. *We shall reign on the earth.* God hath begun to fulfill this word, which shall go on to the ends of the earth: his *Name* is engaged in it, and he will do great things for his people, though they are unworthy, yet for his own great *Name*s sake. The *two Witnesses* being now *arising*, as it is the Judgment of many pretious Saints that they are, the Church will be more, and more *glorious*, notwithstanding all opposition.

Seeing it is a *fige* that God is *comming* neerer to us, and that he will dwell among us, when he *supplants carnall men*, and *carnall things*; and sets his owne people, and worship in their stead, then those whom God hath set and planted in the rooms of others, in the *best places* for the government of the Nations, in the Universities, and all the Land over, these persons have a speciall Obligation upon them to bring forth better fruits than their *Predecessors* upon severall accompts; first, that the Husbandman, who planted them; may have the honour of his worke. Secondly, for their own sakes, and those with whom they live; for in case they bring forth *as bad fruits*, as those trees in whose roome they grow, it will provoke God against them; but when God likes of, and delights in the

the fruits of his people, —he will then continue his presence with them, which is their life, happinesse, and glory; he will then delight to walke in his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits, Cant. 4. 16. and say, this is my resting place, here will I dwell for I have a delight therein, Psal. 132. 13. 14.

The sixtie seventh Observation in Nature.

THe ground of some Orchards is not leuell, but shelving or declining; so that some part of the ground is higher than the rest, and accordingly some of the trees grow upon higher ground than some others: Now the husbandman values not the fruit-trees (at all; the more for their situation, he esteemes not those on the highest ground, more than those on the lowest ground, but he priseth his Trees according to their fruits: His care for his trees on the lowest ground is as much (and sometimes more) as for those on the higher ground.

Proposition
shadowed.

This shadowes out unto us, That

The free love and care of God is as much towards his people in the meanest, outward condition, as towards these who are most eminent in the world.

The great *Mysticall husbandman* hath a large Orchard, he plants his *Fruit-trees* where he pleaseth over all the parts of the world; and some of them are planted on high, and some on low grounds, which he valueth not according to their *Eminency*, or *meanesse* (that with him is not considerable) but according to the truth, and sincerity of their hearts, according to their fruits: *Poore Lazarus*, and *rich Abraham*, are both cared for, and beloved of God, one as well as the other: The *poore widdow* Mark. 12. 42. (that was able to make but one farthing in all the the world) she, and her offering was as well accompted of as *King Davids*, *Solomons*, or others of highest ranke: he respecteth not persons 2 Cor. 19. 7. and againe Rom. 2. 11. There is no respect of persons with God: He will take the servants part (in any just cause) as soon as the Masters, Ephe. 6. 9. He that doth wrong, shall receive for the wrong that

that he hath done, and there is no respect of Persons, Col. 3. 25.
1 Pet. 1. 17.

God hath the same account of the poore, as of the Rich; of the Bond, as of the free, if Believers, Rom. 10. 12. There is no difference between the Jew, and the Greek, for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him: So againe, Rom. 3. 22. He accepteth not the persons of Princes, nor regardeth the Rich more than the Poore, Job. 34. 19.

The serious consideration of this may be a good meanes to keepe the spirits of those humble, who are of the highest rank among Believers; and that they despise not, nor neglect their brethren in a lower rank: Though they are planted on the higher ground, in the Garden of God in any place of power, or authority over others (and upon that account honour, reverence, and subjection (as God requires) is due unto them from their brethren, and fellow-Members of an inferior ranke) yet the same beares no weight in the account of God: All the Nations of the Earth, are but as the drop of a bucket, or as the small dust of the Ballance, in the eye of God, Eccl. 40. 15. How small then are a few men of one Nation, though they may be as mighty hills and Mountaines in eminency, in the sight of men? 1 Use.

All men naturally have a Principle of pride in them, but none are in so much danger of it, as those persons (though godly) who are set above others, in Church, or Commonwealth: and therefore they have the more neede to be minded of it, that they may be aware of that most prevailing Corruption, which puts the Creatures at a distance from God. Paul himselfe had need of something to suppress it, lest he should be exalted above measure, 2 Cor. 12. 7.

Hence we may gather; That believers of the lowest ranke in outward respects, have as great, and as many Priviledges in all Church Assemblies as those of the highest ranke; whether it be to speake, or hear, or partake of any Ordinance for their profit, and edification: so that due respect towards superiors, be observed. 2 Use.

Thirdly: Let all believers of the lowest ranke walke chearefully, notwithstanding any slighting, or neglects from superiors. Thou that art now under, and below many of thy brethren for a

moment, maist be above them hereafter to all Eternity.

The eightieth Observation in Nature.

THose Fruit-trees which have the influence of the sunne continually, they flourish with leaves, blossoms, and fruits continually, as it is in the East, ^a and West Indies: there the sun is all the yeare long, giving forth his heat, and warmth, and never going a far off (so as to make a winter) as in these Northern parts of the world, so that fruit-trees there flourish with leaves and blossoms, green, and ripe fruits all the year long.

^a *Sy Wa: Raw*
ley. 1 Book. 1.
part. Ch. 3. S.
9. 10. pag. 64.
68.

Proposition
shadowed,

This is another Similitude of the state of Spirituall Fruit-trees, and shadowes out unto us, That

Believers who daily walke with God, having the light of his countenance, and constant communion with him, such are abundantly fruit full.

Although every believer is ingrafted into Christ, and draws sap and vertue from him, and hath the countenance of God towards him, and the influences of the spirit to cause fruitfulness, yet not all alike: there is great difference in the degrees of Gods manifesting, and giving out of himselfe to his people. God is a sun to his people, and he shines upon some but seldome, and clouds himselfe againe and withdrawes for a time, and then a winter comes upon that soule. But he is pleased to shine upon some others more constantly, and they have an habituall enjoyment of God; after some sad and darke times of the spirit of bondage, and desolation in the former part of their lives, when they have againe laid hold on their beloved, they will not let him goe; and he is as willing to stay with them, so that they have a constant enjoyment of God, walking daily in communion with him; I mean, for the maine course of their life; though the spirit be not always in a like frame, and constant temper every houre of the day, which none can expect whilst we are in the flesh. Yet as to the generality of their lives, the sun is neere, and discovers himselfe clearly and apparently to the soule. The workings of the spirit of God,

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are manifest, evident and cleare to the soule: the soule acts upon God, and God upon the soule, there are reciprocall acts upon each other daily, frequently. The spirit of God witnesseth, and sealeth to the soule the sure and unchangeable love of God in Christ, and the soule sets to its seale also, that God is true, gracious, precious, and saies to God (with a lively faith) thou art he whom my soule loveth, thou art my portion, my Treasure, my God, and Saviour, my all through Christ. God acts upon the soule, and saies, thou art mine, I have chosen thee, and will never leave thee, nor forsake thee; and the soule acts upon God againe, and saies, thou art mine, thou hast made me to chuse thee, and I will love thee, and serve thee, and praise thee, and joy in thee for ever. Thus with infinite Acts of this Nature is this Communion continued (in daily walking with God) whereby such soules are so revived, filled and satisfied, that they are abundantly fruitfull, and bring forth fruits continually.

These trees are continually green and flourishing with leaves, blossoms, and fruits: such a one (as the Prophet saies, *Jer. 17. 8.*) He shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her Rootes by the River, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her lease shall be greene, and shall not be carefull in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yeilding fruit. And *Psal. 1. 3.* He is as a tree planted by the rivers of waters, his Lease shall not wither, &c. The righteous shall flourish like a Palm-tree, the most beautifull and excellent of all trees, and which is continually green and fruitfull, because it growes in those parts where the sun is continually neere it.

Now by the Rivers, waters, sun, dewes, rimes, &c. we are to understand the manifestations of God, the influences of his Spirit, *Hos. 14 5.* I will be as the dew to Israel; and then it followes, he shall grow as the Lilly, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon, *vers. 6.* his branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the Olive tree: I will be dew, and raine and sunshine and then they shall be as the Olive tree, or as the Palm tree, which are allwaies greene, and fruitfull.

So that such Christians as live under the dewes, and droppings of heaven, and have the sun still shining upon them in their daily walke, and Communion with God, they are abundantly fruitfull.

This our Saviour himselfe tels us, *Joh. 15. 5.* He that abideth in me, & I in him,

him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. This abiding in Christ, is to abide, and continue in Communion with him, by daily acting all the graces: such as walke so bring forth much fruit.

1 Use.

These things being so, we should hence learne to keepe close to God, and daily to walke with him, to lay out our selves diligently by Prayer, Meditation, publique Ordinances, viewing over all experiences, and former manifestations of the love of God in Christ towards us, &c. to gaine, and keep the light of Gods countenance, and cleare evidences of his love, the lively, and constant, or frequent actings of his spirit in us; that by this sunshine, dew, and raine of heaven, his fruit-trees may be continually greene, and flourishing, with blossomes, and fruits. This and no other, is the way to be abundantly fruitfull, whereby we may bring much glory to God and gaine infinite advantages to our selves for when the soule by these things is put into an heavenly, and spirituall frame and temper, then the pleasant fruits flow forth abundantly: when the North and South winds of the spirit awake and blow upon the Garden, then the spices thereof flow forth, Cant. 4. 16.

The sixty ninth Observation in Nature.

THe Husbandman does not only Graft his fruit-trees, but also Orders them from yeare to yeare, many other waies, by Pruning off all irregular and fruitlesse branches, weeding, watering, baring the roots, sometimes laying good soyles to them, and sometimes abates of their too full, and fat nourishment, doing divers other things for the good of the trees in order to fruit-bearing.

Proposition
Shadowed.

This shadowes out unto us, That

God doth not only engraft his people into Christ, but orders them in all other respects also, to make them abundantly fruit full.

Materiall fruit-trees (through the fatnesse of soyle) do frequently shoote forth strong and big branches, cal'd proud shoots, and bring forth great, faire, broad leaves: but such trees bring forth but few and small fruits. In such a case the Husbandman deprives them of some part of their fat feeding, and put unto their roots some

some sand or barren earth in sted, and cuts off the proud shoots.

So it is with the people of God: although they are Ingrafted, yet unlesse the husbandman looke to them they will often (through prosperity and abundance) shoote forth many branches of pride, lofty and high Imaginations, and conceits, and content themselves with bringing forth fair, broad Leaves of shewes and professions, Ceremonies, formes, and something thats outward, but bring forth (all the while) small, and few fruits: So that because this too full feeding with the fine flower, bony, and Oyle of prosperity causeth them to abate of their fruit-fulnesse, therefore the husbandman will deprive them of some part of it: as we see, *Ezek. 16. 13.* *1 have diminished thine ordinary food;* and in sted thereof makes them feed upon the bread of adversity and water of affliction: *Ezek. 30. 20.* whereby they become more fruitfull.

The husbandman also prunes his fruit-trees: *John 15. 2.* *He purgeth them that they may bring forth more fruit.*

Thereby they are full of mercy, and good fruits: *Iam. 3. 17.* all his corrections (through his wise, and gracious ordering) bring forth the peaceable fruit of righteousnessse, *Heb. 12. 11.*

When the corrupt stock of Nature springs forth, he cuts them off, *Ezek. 27. 8.* *In measure when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it.* His rough wind, *vers. 8.* blowes upon them, and this is his end, *vers. 6.* *By this shall the Iniquity of Iacob be purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin.*

The husbandman also (in case of inconveniences by too full feeding) strikes into the body (or Master roote) of the tree, a Pin of Iron, or hard wood, that the superfluous sap may run out: So Paul was ordered, *2 Cor. 12. 7.* *There was given him a thorne in the flesh, lest he should be exalted above measure.* See also *Ezek. 28. 24.* He calls for the Northwind of afflictions, as well as the Southwind of consolations, to make fruits abound, *Cant. 4. 16.*

The people of God by Experience find these things profitable.

This should make us not only patient under all afflictions, and orderings of God, but also to be thankfull for them: let God (the wise and gracious Husbandman) have praise from us, who

pruneeth and correcteth us for our profit, to be partakers of his holinesse, to bring forth much fruit to his glory, Heb. 12. 10. Joh. 15. 8.

The seventieth Observation in Nature.

Naturall Fruit-trees grow every yeare stronger, and stronger; every year the Branches put forth, and enlarge themselves more or lesse, they spread wider, and higher, and stronger untill they attaine their naturall bignesse, and are thereby more able to resist strong winds, and more out of the reach of Cattle, and common enemies.

This is another Similitude of the state of spirituall fruit-trees, and shadowes out unto us this Proposition, That

The graces of believers increase daily in strength, whereby they are more and more able to resist spirituall enemies.

Proposition
shadowed.

After believers are ingrafted into Christ their Roote and stock, they from thence forward receive sap, and life, and power from him, whereby they are acted in all duties, whereby they increase, and get strength from day to day, Ps. 84. 7. they go from strength to strength: being ingrafted into Christ, we are established, strengthened, and built up in him, Col. 2. 7. And Eph. 4. 15. We grow up in him in all things which is the head, even Christ, vers. 16. from whom the whole body fitly joyned together, and compacted, by that which every joynt supplyeth, according to the effectuall working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of it selfe in love.

Paul and Apollos were Instrumentall in Planting and watering, God gave the increase, 1 Cor. 3. 6. 7. The whole body of Christ increaseth with the increase of God, Col. 2. 19.

To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance, Mat. 25. 29. His brooke shall become a River, and his River shall become a sea. As Materiall fruit-trees shoote upwards, and extend their branches yearly, so do the Mysticall: if there be but a carefull use of meanes, Phil 3. 13. This one thing I do, forgetting things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I presse towards the marke &c. Graces being at first but as a graine of mustard-seed they increase unto large branches, Matth. 13. 31.

Every

Every *Act* both in Nature and grace, doth strengthen the *habit*: and according to the frequency and vigor in *acting*, so the *habit* improves; if the *Acts* of grace be but seldome, and but weake, the *Habits*, and *Principles* grow but slowly: And when *Acts* cease for a time (as in some Temptations) yet the *habits*, *seeds*, and *Principles* lie secret, and sute in the soule, and will (as great pent up, and smothered for a time) breake forth afterwards more strongly, and will enable the soule to trample upon all enemies.

The use of this may be to discover who are really in Christ.

Use.

As there is an *increase* in all the Members, and parts of Children (if in health) so in the *spirituall man*. Ephes. 4. 16. according to the effectuall working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body: As it is thus of the Church: so also of every particular Member of it.

Now this *increase* is not in all alike, nor at all times to be perceived in any one person, but differs according to *Talents* of grace at first received, and also according to the *operations* of the Spirit, and according to the *meanes*, and *helps* that Christians have, and use in the course of their lives.

Therefore labour to discern an increase.

And lest some weake soules should stumble at this, and question the truth of all, because they discern not an increase of grace in themselves: but rather a decay; because they find not now such vehement workings of affliction, nor such enlargednesse of heart as sometimes heretofore: Let such consider, that God sometimes withdraws, that they may be sensible of the different *states*, *tempers*, and *frames* of their spirits, which may be made use of as a speciall evidence of spirituall life.

Secondly: strength of grace consisteth not in the enlargednesse of the afflictions in duties (which is usually most in young Christians) but in a solid, well grounded faith, knowledg, experience, and cleare apprehensions of the love of God in Christ, these (more or lesse, if we are diligent in the use of meanes) grow to the last; though there are (in some Christians) some interruptions, through Trials and temptations, which yet God doth order for their advantage.

The seventy first Observation in Nature.

Some fruit-trees that are but weake, crooked, and uncomly Trees, that have little beauty, in respect of shape, and colour, &c. they are (notwithstanding) more profitable, and bring forth more pleasant and more usefull fruits, than many faire, tall, and beautifull trees. To instance in the Vine, and the fig-tree; What trees are so low, crooked, weake, of so deadish coloured outsides, as they, which yet yeild the most refreshing, pleasant nourishment? Many high, strong, beautifull trees are farre short of them in worth, and goodnesse.

*Ficus & uva
inter fructus
autumnales
principatum
obtinent.*

*Proposition
shadowed.*

This Observation shadowes out unto us, That

Many persons of a low ranke, and but of despised parts, do yet bring forth more profitable fruits, than many others eminent in gifts, and outward respects.

Many of the Saints (in their measure and proportion) are as their Lord and Saviour, of whom it is said, he hath no forme nor comlineffe, there is no beauty that we should desire him: he is despised, and rejected of men, &c. *Esay. 53. 2, 3.* and yet who brought forth such fruits as he? who (besides that great, and maine worke for which he was sent) went daily about doing good, & did alwaies that which was pleasing to his father, *Joh. 8. 29.* As he was despised, and rejected of men, for the holinesse and spirituallnesse of his doctrine, and life, as well as for his meannesse in the world; even so are many of his people at this day; And so it was (too) in former times; Were not the Apostles and disciples of Christ, of a low ranke in the world, taken from meane employments, whose naturall parts had little improvement by humane Learning, which caused the proud Pharisees to despise, and reject both them and their doctrine, and yet who brought forth the best fruits, they, or the Pharisees?

That great fruit-tree (mentioned *Luk. 18. 11.*) which was growen (in his owne conceipt, and its like in others too) as high as heaven, and spread large, yet his fruits were not accepted; as the fruits of the poore, low, despised shrub, the *Publican*, who came farre

far short of the Pharaſes in outward reſpects.

That of the Apoſtle 1 Cor. 1. 27, &c. is a ſufficient prooſe for this point. The *ſooliſh things*, the *weake things*, the *baſe things*, the *deſpised things*: The *perſons and things*, their *Gifts and endowments*, their *Judgments and actings* that the worldly, and carnall wiſe men, and ſome ſpiritual men very carnall in their Judgments and waies, account *ſooliſh, weake, baſe*, and altogether *deſpiſe*, and trample on, *theſe*, even *theſe*, are of more eſteeme with God, and are more profitable in his Church, than many perſons and things eminent in the world, and of *higheſt eſteeme* among men.

Learn then to judg, and eſteeme of *perſons and things*, of *Trees*, and *fruits* as God doth: judg *righteous Judgment*; looke upon things with a *ſpiritual eye*, and taſt them with a *ſpiritual Palar*: God expects now that his people ſhould be more *(ſpiritual)* than in former times, that they ſhould come off more from *Externals*, whereon former ages have ſo much ſtood. *Gospell worſhip*, and *converſation*, is more *in the ſpirit*, than many (even of the godly) are yet convinced of; The *plaine ſimplicity of the Goppell*, in the *delivery*, and *manifeſtation* of it to others, is *deſpised*: Perſons who *preach and publiſh the Goppell* (and cannot but ſpeake the things they have heard and ſeene) are *neglected, deſpised, and cried downe*, unleſſe they come adorned with eminent *Gifts, Humane learning*, and other *externall qualifications*, which the *ſleſhly wiſdome* of men eyes more than the *ſpiritual*, *ſavory*, *well taſted fruits* they bring forth, to the *refreshing*, and *feeding* the ſoules of men to eternall life. One of theſe *poore, low, deſpised, ſpiritual trees* (without forme, or comlineſſe in a carnall eye) brings forth more good and profitable fruits, than an hundred of ſome of thoſe who come with *externall Ornaments of Titles degrees, tongues, excellency*

Uſe.

Acts 4. 20.

of ſpeech and ^b *Humane wiſdome, which* parts are excellent, and of ſingular uſe in the Church of God; if ſanctified, if in regenerate perſons (eſpecially in ſuch who have alſo great meaſure, 1 Co. 2. 1, 4. *My ſpeech and my preſures of grace*, to make all ſubſervient thereunto) otherwiſe all is uſed. and turned for ſelfe, and ſiniſter of mans wiſdome, but in the *demonſtration* ends and purpoſes, and againſt Chriſt.

on of the ſpirit, and of power.

T

Plaine

Plaine experimentall discourses of spirituall, holy men, but of ordinary gifts, about *Christ and his kingdome*, are for the most part, more profitable (amongst the *vulgar sort of people*) than the discourses of learned men, about the same things: One reason (besides the speciall presence of the spirit) may be, because the *Matter, Method, and expressions* of ordinary gifted persons, are all *suted, and fitted to Common capacities*, they expresse themselves in words *easy to be understood*: as the *Apostle* saith, *1 Cor. 14. 9.* They speak to men (as the *Apostles* in their time) in their own *Language*: therefore things have the more easy, and ready entrance, and admission into their spirit.

Whereas persons of *high attainments in Gifts* (most commonly) speake (as the *Apostle* saies) *into the aire*, in an *unknowne Tongue*, as to *vulgar understandings*, when (perhaps) they think they speake plainly.

1 Cor. 14. 9.

Now besides what has been said, continuall experience proves these things abundantly. Therefore let not *Morall Gifts*, and attainments be over valued, while the *spirit of Christ, and his graces* are neglected.

The seventie second Observation in Nature.

THe Husbandman expects fruits from all his *Fruit-trees*, he will not approve of any one barren-tree in his Orchard: Though he lookes not that all should beare alike, yet he will not indure any fruit-trees that are not fruit-full, or some way or other profitable to him.

Hereby we are taught: That

God will not allow an idle person; but expects every one should be profitable in his place.

Proposition
shadowed.

The world is Gods great family, and he will have no one idle, but every one (that is able to labour) some way, or other employed in that which is good; And therefore he bestowes upon every one a *Talent* at least, upon some two, upon some more: some Gift, or Gifts of body, or mind, or both, which they ought to employ, and improve for the honour of their Lord and Master, and

and good of their brethren. A day of accompt is coming and hard by, when there will be a sad reckoning for all idle persons, *Matth. 25. 26.* thou wicked and slothfull servant; cast ye the unprofitable servant into utter darknesse, *vers. 30.* No one is exempted from a particular calling, or labour, *1 Cor. 7. 20.* Let every man (saith he) abide in the same calling wherein he was called.

Paul could not abide an idle person, he would not allow a man meate unless he would worke; if able, *2 Thes. 3. 10.* Thus we commanded you, That if any would not worke, neither should he eat: we must worke either with the hand, or with the mind: *Laborant qui mente operantur.* We command you (saith the Apostle) worke with your own hand, *1 Thes. 4. 11.* And againe, *Ephes. 4. 28.* Working with his hands the things that is good, that he may have something to give to him that needeth.

August. de
Op. Monach.
Lib. 2.

The spirit gives Gifts diversly, but the end is to profit withall, *2 Cor. 12. 7.*

Such as have Gifts, and Talents, and use them not, are like Idols who have eyes, and see not, ears, and heare not, hands, and worke not, feet, and walke not, *Psal. 150. 5. 6. 7.*

Hence we see the shame, and danger of many persons in the world: especially of the richer, and greater sort; who having severall Gifts, and Talents bestowed on them, are (notwithstanding) idle and unprofitable, letting their parts rust, and lye hid in a napkin: Though they have rich Revenues to live upon, yet they ought to labour for God, his Church, and the Common wealth. *Nemo sibi natus.* Every man is a Member of the body Politique, and ought to do something for the good of the whole body: as the Members in the Natural body.

1 Use.

Here what Mr Boulton saies of such as are unprofitable in Church, and Common wealth: he is (saith he) a cursed drone, a child of idleness, and sloth, the very tennis-ball of Temptation, most unworthie of the blessings and benefits of humane society, who doth not one way or other cooperate, and contribute to the Common good with his best endeavours in some honest particular calling.

a Directions for walking with God, pag. 49.

The best men in all ages have ever set themselves to some good employments, God would have none idle, no not Adam (even in his state of innocency) he had an Employment assigned him, being

put into the Garden of Eden to dresse it, and to keep it, Gen. 2. 15.

So then: her's an *Employment* (among others) fit for the best men; the worke of the first man, even in his perfect state, and that appointed by God himselfe, as befitting such a condition: *Philosophers, Kings, Emperors*, in former ages, delighted in the worke of an Orchard, as was formerly shew'd at large.

Men may honour God, greatly profit themselves, the Church, and Commonwealth by their studies and labors in a Garden of Fruit trees.

The seventie third Observation in Nature.

Some Fruit-trees live longer than others, some die while they are young, others when they are large trees, at their full growth; perhaps by diseases, or excessive heat and drynesse at their roots, or are violently cut downe for their barrennesse or bad fruits: others live till they be growen very old, and die by degrees with very age, and as these are removed the husbandman plants others in their roomes,

This shadowes out unto us the state of Mysticall fruit-trees: in this Proposition: That

Proposition
shadowed.

The life of man is very uncertaine: some die in Childhood, others in youth, others in old age, and in the roomes of these others arise.

Seeds of decay are sown in the best soyle of mans body, which spring, and grow, and bring forth (sooner, or later) dissolution. The Causes of decay and death both in naturall, and spirituall fruit-trees are often alike. The husbandman observing the Canker, Wormes, or other diseases to seise upon some of his bad trees which he sets little by, he neglects them, and saies, if they die, let them die, I'll set better in their roomes. So saith the Mysticall Husbandman of his fruit-trees (because of their barrennesse, or bad fruits) when he sees diseases, or miseries seise upon them; I will not feede you, that that dieth, let it die, and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off: Ezek 11. 5. he hath not that care of them, as he hath of his fruitfull trees, they are not within his speciall protection, John 17. 9. I pray not for the world.

Again;

Againe, some he cuts downe in their full strength, as was prophesied against Elies house, 1 Sam. 2. 33. *All the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age:* So Ier. 15. 8. *a spoyler at noone day, her sunne is gon downe while it was yet day:* as to the people of Iudah (in the generall) in time of their prosperity, so to many in particular in their health, and full strength, Psal. 55. 25. *The blood thirsty, and deceitfull man shall not live out halfe their daies.* So Psalm. 37. 36.

Now as these are cut downe, others are planted, Ps. 109. 7. *Let his daies be few, and let another take his office:* and Ps. 75. 8. *he putteth downe one, and setteth up another.*

Others (againe) live till they be very old, and decay by degrees, and are like old Barzillai, 2 Sam. 9. 35. *who (by reason of age) could not tast what he ate, or dranke, &c.* they live till they be satisfied with age, Ps. 91. 16.

Seeing our lives are so uncertaine, and that wee know not when our Lord will come, Mark 13. 35. *Whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at the dawning of the day, we should therefore be alwaies ready, that is: to be sure that we have an interest in Christ,* without which there can be no preparation for death.

This shewes the desperate estate of all unregenerate persons, they are in danger every moment of a sudden destruction; and many times it comes in the height and fulnesse of their outward prosperity, as with Herod upon the Throne of his glory, Belshazzar in the midst of his feast. Dan. 5. 6. *Haman at the Banquet of wine, in his glory, Hester. 7. 10. I have seen (saith David) the wicked in great power, and spreading himselfe like a greene Bay-tree &c.* But how quickly was he gon? Psal. 37. 35.

Hence we should be stirred up to bring forth good, and profitable fruits, that so the husbandman may take care of us, and nourish, and prune, and order his fruit-trees for many yeares, according to his promise, Prov. 10. 27. *My sonne keepe my Commandements, for length of daies, and long life, and peace shall they adde to thee:* especially let us attend to the works of our generation, according to the pointing out of the word, and hand of providence.

1 Use.

2 Use.

3 Use.

The seventy fourth Observation in Nature.

WE see by experience that what kinds of seeds of fruit-trees wee sow in our Nurseries, such will be the trees, and consequently the fruits of those trees; if the seed be good, the trees and fruits will be so also, if the seed be naught, so will be the trees and fruits: the seed contains in it the forme of the trees and fruits.

This is another *Similitude* of the state of spirituall fruit-trees, and shadowes out unto us this Proposition, That

Proposition
shadowed.

According to mens Principles, such are their actions, and their rewards according to both.

Originall sin, corruption of Nature, is the seed that lies in the soule of all mankind, which naturally springs up, and growes like a plant, or tree, higher, and larger, and stronger every day, branching it selfe, and breaking forth in thoughts, words, and works: now according to the Nature of this seed, or these branches, or trees, such will be the fruits. *Jer. 6. 19.* Behold I will bring evill upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts; we see what those fruits were in the following words, even perishing and destruction. Also *Jer. 32. 19.* Thine eyes are upon all the waies of the sonnes of men, to give everie one according to his waies, and according to the fruit of his doings. And againe, *Hos. 10. 13.* Ye have prolonged wickednesse, ye have reaped iniquity, ye have eaten the fruit of lies: and what the fruit was we see in the following verses: *dashing in peeces, and utter destruction.*

So also on the other side; the seed, or principles of grace in the soule springs up, and growes like a tree into a body, boughes, and branches, which bring forth good, and pleasant fruits, whereof we may eat, not only in this life, but also to all Eternity. This seed springs up, and branches it selfe into thoughts, words, actions, multitudes of waies in our conversations; a wholesome tongue is a tree of life. *Prov. 15. 3.* The fruit of this Tree in Prayer, Praises, &c. hath a sweete, and acceptable tast, in the account of the husbandman. So also is it pleasant unto men, *Prov. 25. 11.* A word fitly spoken, is like apples of Gold in pictures of silver.

All sorts of spirituall seede brings forth answerable fruits, Gal. 6. 8. *He that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.*

The spirit of God, and the habits of grace in the soule continually spring up, and bring forth good fruits: persons in whom these dwell act according to their Natures, and fruits; and rewards are accordingly dispensed, Rom. 6. 22. *Ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*

These things being so, they call aloud to every unregenerate person to breake off their sinnes by Repentance, thereby to cut off all the boughes, and branches that spring from the seed, and roote of corrupt Nature, otherwise they will certainly bring forth poisonous, and deadly fruits, whereof they shall eat and drinke to all eternity, Rom. 7. 5. *The motions of sin which were by the Law, did worke in our Members to bring forth fruit unto death. Naturall men cannot act any thing that's good, because ther's no good seede, no spirituall principles; therefore it necessarily followes their fruit will be bitter: Gal. 5. 7. Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man sowes, that shall he also reape: he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption: The fruit, the reward is perdition, eternall misery: They shall eat the fruit of their owne way, Prov. 1. 31. so also, Job. 4. 8. and Prov. 22. 8.*

Men may as rationally expect pleasant Apples from Crab-seede, or good wheat from Tare-seede, as comfort or happinesse from corrupt Principles.

This Proposition is a ground of unspeakable comfort, and encouragement unto all that feare God; they have a seede within them, 1 Job. 3. 9. *his seed remaineth in him;* that is, the vigour, the workings, the efficacy of the spirit, Principles, and habits of grace, the word of God, these remaine in believers, which spring up, grow, and bring forth fruit to eternall life: the fruit is according to the seede, their reward according to their Principles and actions, Gal. 6. 8.

He that now goes on his way weeping, and beareth good seede, shall doubtlesse come againe with joy, bringing his sheaves with him, Psalm. 126. 6.

Ther's an Emphasis in the word doubtlesse: out of all question, nothing more certaine, we shall reap in due time, if we faint not, Gal.

1 Use.

2 Use.

Gal. 6. 9. And that we may not faint, let us often make use of these cordiall promises already mentioned, with this (and the like) wrought downe to us from the hand of God, *Esay. 3. 10. say ye to the righteous, it shall goe well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.*

The seventie fifth Observation in Nature.

Of this see at
large Obser.
64.

Fruit-trees are profitable many waies; in the wood and boughes pruned off, to burne, also for Ioyners and other Traddelmen: the boughes and blossomes adorne the house in the Spring; their odor is refreshing to the spirits, and their coole shade in the heat of summer; but especially profitable in their fruits, whereof we eat, and drink all the year long.

This is another Similitude and shadowes out unto us this Proposition: That

Proposition
shadowed.

Spirituall Fruit-trees ingrafted into Christ are many waies profitable in their Generations.

Such as fear God will certainly follow some profitable course of life, some lawfull calling or labour, either of body, or mind, or both, whereby they may advantage themselves, and others.

They are also profitable in many spirituall respects, by discourse, reproofe, counsell, and admonition: by Prayer, Preaching, printing Bookes, communicating their Talents for the good of others; by their Almes, and acts of charity, and love to their brethren, and to all by their good Examples, which shine forth as lights in the world, directing others.

They are profitable to others, both in privative, and positive respects: wicked persons who live amongst them, are often spared for their sakes, the Tares are suffered to grow because amongst the Wheat; yea, and share of many positive outward blessings for their sakes: *Laban* and his family shared of the blessings powred downe upon *Jacob*. Gen. 30. 27. which *Laban* acknowledged, *I have learned (saith he) by experience, that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake.*

So *Patiphar* had many outward blessings for *Iosephs* sake: likewise *Pharaoh* and all his Court fared the better because of *Ioseph*: he and his house had a full Table, when others perished with hunger.

Yea, Godliness, and Godly men are profitable to all purposes, 1Tim. 4.8. *having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

Hence we may conclude the madnesse and unreasonablenesse of all unregenerate persons, who hate the *godly*, and persecute them continually, although they are their best freinds, preserving them from many judgments, and procuring to them many temporall blessings: every man naturally seekes the destruction of things dangerous, and deadly to him, but who but unreasonable men will seek to destroy things usefull, and profitable to them, yea persons, and things without which they cannot subsist? for were the *Godly* taken out of the world, a flood of fire would quickly consume the wicked.

A whole City was preserved, for a time, for *Lots sake*, Gen² 19.22, *I cannot do any thing till thou be come to Zoar.*

This should make every one to love and cherish these profitable Trees where ever they grow, and to defend them from spoyle, or hurt, as much as in us lies.

When Onesimus was ingrafted into Christ, then he became profitable, both to Paul, and to others, *Epistle to Philemon. 10, 11.* Now profitable, both to thee and me: so that Paul requires of Philemon to accompt of him now, not as a servant, but as a brother, even as of Paul himselfe, *vers. 12.* So that we should love the people of God, not only because they are *belov'd of God*, and beare his Image, and are fellow brethren, and fellow Members with us, but also because they are so many waies profitable.

Although the graft changes the sap of the wild stock into its own Nature, yet not totally; a tang of the wild nature remains.

The seventy sixth Observation in Nature.

The sower, and bitter sap of the wild stocke (which is in- Nature, yet
grafted) runs through all the whole tree , into the body, not totally, yea
boughes, branches, buds, leaves, blossomes, fruits, and does something tang of the
a imbase Wild nature
remains.

inbase the fruits, making them lesse pleasant, and sweete, yet the fruits are good, and acceptable fruits.

This shadowes out unto us: That

Proposition
shadowed.

The most spirituall actings of believers cast of corrupt nature, which notwithstanding are acceptable unto God.

^a Of this see
more pa. 119
Observ. 59.

The soule, and spirit of man is the stock into which the word of God, and Principles of grace are ingrafted; and these drawing, and making use of the sap, life, strength, and powers of the soule in all the faculties, doe change them into their owne spirituall nature, in a great measure, yet not totally; even as the ^anaturall grafis of a good and pleasant nature do change the sap, verue, and strength of the wild and lower stockes (so much thereof as the Grafts draw) into their owne nature, in a great measure, but not wholly.

Though Christ and his graces dwell in his people, yet corruption (in a measure) abides there also, and this corruption runs through the whole man, and is mixed with all our thoughts, words, and actings: though they proceed from the principles and habits of grace fixed in the soule by the spirit of God; as some noxious, or hurtfull quality in the Liver, mixeth it selfe with the blood, and stains it throughout all the body.

Spirituall acts, as they proceed from the spirit of God, Principles of grace, and are done in love to God, and directed to right ends, are pure and perfect these fruits have a pleasant tast with God the husbandman; yet as they proceed from us, and are acted in, and through the faculties of the soule (where Corruptions, and imperfections reside) they are imperfect.

This mixture of corruptions with our services and duties was typified in the offerings of the people, Exod 28.38.

Aaron (a type of Christ) bore the iniquity of the holy things.

And the Prophet *Isay* (upon this accompt) pronounces all our best righteousnesses to be as filthy raggs, *Isay*. 64.6. The Apostle also knowing this, complained of it, *Rom*. 7.21. I find a Law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. All believers know, and find this by continuall Experience.

1 Use.

This shewes the vanity and unsoundnesse of that Doctrine that maintaines good workes as meritorious, and meanes of justification: but

but let us looke unto Christ our high Priest to beare the imperfections of our *best workes*.

The consideration of this may be a meanes to pull downe the high thoughts of such as are lifted up, in looking upon their *Gifts of Nature, acquired abilities, graces and best workes*, in regard *Corruption runnes through all these, and stains them; our purest wine is mixt with water, and our best fruits are but bitter sweets.* 2 Use.

This should make us rejoice in, and admire the infinite love of God in Christ, who notwithstanding all imperfections, and failings, accepts, and likes (yea and is delighted with) the duties, and services of his people: *Love covereth all sins, Prov. 10. 12.* 3 Use.

Though the Church and every believing soule be black and spotted as the Moone, through the *staines of Corruptions*, yet such is the love of Christ, that he over lookes all, as though nothing were amisse, *Can. 4. 7. Thou art faire my love, there is no spot in thee.*

The seventie seventh Observation in Nature.

IN Fruit-trees are two Natures, the one of the sower wild stock, the other of the pleasant graft: Now these two natures being in one body strive together, as all contraries (joined) do, to convert each other into its owne kind, or nature; ^a but the Nature of the graft is predominant, and converts the sap (that it drawes) into its owne nature; though not totally. See pag. 119. ^a Even as hot water and cold being mixed, these qualities strive to change each other, and that which is most powerfull prevails.

This Observation shadowes out unto us; That There is a continuall combat betweene grace and nature in every regenerate person, but grace prevails.

Every believer by engrafting into Christ, receives another nature, the Divine Nature, 2 Pet. 1. 4. which abides in the soule, together wth the other, the corrupt nature wqich it had before: Now these two natures being contrary oppose one another all our lives long: There are motions of the spirit, and motions of the flesh, upon all occasions, workings, and inclinations in the soule towards, and against good and evill, Proposition shadowed.

Gal. 5. 17. the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. The flesh still moves against the motions of the spirit of God, and principles of grace, framing objections, and reasonings against good motions, Rom. 7. 21. I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me: The spirit is ready to every good worke, but the flesh is sluggish, loath, backward, vers. 22. I delight in the Law of God concerning the inner man, but I see another Law in my Members warring against the Law of my mind &c.

But now, though it be so, that the motions of the flesh oppose the motions of the spirit, yet for all that the spirituall man rules in the soule, for the maine and generality of our lives: And Christians know by Experience that (according to the promise *Gal. 5. 16. Walke in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh*) when they walke circumspectly, and watch over the heart, to keepe it up in a spirituall frame, in communion with God, then the flesh is low, and kept under.

1 Use.

Seeing there is a continuall combate betweene the flesh and the spirit, this should make us watchfull against the flesh that it prevaile not; we know the flesh never stirs but to do us hurt: who would not be incensed against such an enemy? now the way to prevaile against the flesh is to cherish, and delight to obey the motions of the spirit, as before, *Gal. 5. 16.*

The seventie eighth Observation in Nature.

Some fruit trees (as being of different kinds, and for severall other causes) bring forth more fruits than others; and the same fruit trees bring forth more fruits some yeares, than they do some other yeares. Experience tells us, that when there comes a pleasant, and mild spring (with other concurrent advantages) trees beare as many fruits, as in 3 or 4 other yeares.

Proposition
shadowed.

This shadowes out unto us, That

Some believers are (by advantages) more fruitfull than others, and at some, more than at other times.

Every

Every Christian being engrafted into Christ brings forth some good fruits; and having a Talent, or more, a stock of grace, gifts, and advantages, he employes and improves all one way or other, for the honour of God: but some believers have greater measures of grace, and more advantages of improving them than others, and therefore their returns are greater, and their fruits are more.

We see *Matth. 25. 20.* He that had *five Talents* he brought forth *more fruits* than they that had received *lesse*: And the *Apostle* saies *1 Cor. 15. 10.* *I labored more abundantly than they all.*

Some Christians as they have greater measures of the spirit, and the graces of the spirit, so they have better naturall parts, and more outward helps and meanes, in respect of time to heare, and read the word, to converse with others, speciall dispensations of Providence, and the like advantages: whereby they are enabled to bring forth more fruits than others who want such helps, and means of fruitfulness.

Some are carried on with vigorous actings of spirit, with a lively hope, with a strong faith, with fervent love, and with great measures of every grace, and can do and suffer more for God, than other believers can.

Others againe having but weake naturall parts, small measures of knowledge and grace, wanting helps and meanes of growth and improvement, having but dim evidences of the love of God, their fruits are according to these, fewer, and smaller than some other Christians bring forth.

Yes: the same individuall person brings forth more and better fruits at some seasons than at others.

At those times when the soule is in a more spirituall frame and temper, in more immediate communion with God, when the spirit of God sensibly actuates, and quickens the Principles, and habits of grace in the soule, and makes them lively, and vigorous, when the North and South winds blow upon the Gardens, then the spices thereof flow forth, and fruits abound. But at some other times the actings of the soule are but low, and weake, while the spirit withdrawes and withholds his operations; if the winds blow not, the ship with all its sailes moves slowly.

This being so: let no sincere soule be discouraged, and disheartned

(yeilding to a temptation) to see some other Christians go beyond them in fruitfulness: if such diligently presse on towards the marke, they shall be accepted. It may be others have received more from God than thou hast, more Talents of Gifts, Graces, time, and many advantages: Now there being a sincere, and ready mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not, 2 Cor. 8. 12.

2^d Use.

Secondly: seeing we are more fruitfull at some than at other times, this should teach every one of us to observe and watch over the frame of our spirits from day to day, that so when they are in that low, and dull temper, we may endeavour (what in us lies) by all experienced meanes to raise them out of it, into that spirituall and lively frame, afore mentioned; wherein we bring forth more fruits, and obtaine unspeakable advantages.

The seventie ninth Observation in Nature.

THe husbandman rejects not his fruit-trees because they sometimes faile in bringing forth fruits; perhaps a cold time may come when they are in blossome, and spoile much or most of them, or if that fruit they bring forth be somewhat imperfect by spots, roughnesse, chaps, or the like, yet if it tast well, if it have a good relish, he approves of the fruits, and commends them, makes much of the trees, notwithstanding all imperfections in both.

Hence we learne this Lesson, That

Proposition
shadowed.

God beares with the failings, and imperfections of his people, and is ever ready to take notice of, and commend the good that is in them.

The Lord is pleased to beare with the failings of his people, and seemes not to see them, but contrariwise takes notice of what good is in them, and speakes of it with commendation, as if it were their owne.

We see this fully in the case of Job: God passeth by his many, and great failings, and scarce takes notice of them (in standing so much upon his justification, and breaking out to curse the day of his birth, &c) but on the contrary obserues and commends what is good in him, *Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servants*

vane

want Job hath, and Jam. 5. 11. ye have heard of the patience of Job.

David sinned, and failed very much in many things, as in purposing, and going about to destroy Nabal, and all his house, 2 Sam. 25. 22. without a just cause: in numbring the people, and in many other things upon record: all which God passeth by as if they had not beene, and saies of him, that David walked before him with a perfect heart, and departed not from him in any thing, save in the matter of Uriah, 1 Kings 15. 5.

How wonderfully did God beare with Jonah, and how mild was God towards him, when Iona was up in an angry, sturdy humour, and would needs maintaine it, and answer God peremptorily, I do well to be angry Jonah? 4. 9. So Christ passeth by the ignorance and prejudice of Nathaniel concerning himselfe, and insted of a reproofe gives him a commendation, Behold an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile, Job. 1. 46. 47.

And as this is the love of Christ towards particular persons, so also towards his whole Church: though the Church be as full of spots as the Moone, yet the exceeding love of Christ covers a multitude of faults, Prov. 10. 12. and saies, thou art all faire my love, there is no spot in thee, Can. 4. 7. Love beareth all things, endureth all things, 1 Cor. 13. 7.

God doth not only conceale the failings of his people very much, but he takes notice of, and commends the most secret good they doe: and sometimes publisheth the secret and closet good works of his people upon the house top, Luk. 12. 3. Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same, Rom. 13. 3. Yea praise not only of men but of God, Rom. 2. 29. As it is our duty to speake well of God, and the things of God, to his praise; so it is the pleasure, and good will of God to speake well of his people, to their praise and commendation: so he spake of Abraham, Gen. 18. 19. I know that he will command his children and household to walke in my waies, &c. The like commendation is given of Moses, My servant Moses is faithfull in all mine house: There are many instances of Gods concealing the faults, and failings of his people, with commendation of the good that is in them.

Now God judgeth righteous judgment, therefore 'tis our true honour to be commended by him. No: he that commendeth himselfe is approved, but he whom the Lord commendeth, 2 Cor. 10. 18.

This

1 Use.

This should make us very carefull to avoid what may offend this our indulgent, and gracious father: seeing he shewes his love in concealing our faults, let us shew our love in suppressing, and declining what is evill: let this be one fruit of our Love to God: Let it be far from us to turne this grace, and kindnesse of God into wantonnesse, to be the more bold, and take more liberty in sinning, because God is so ready to pardon and passe it by, *Psal. 97. 10. Yee that love the Lord, hate evill: the hatred of evill is a fruit of love.*

2 Use.

The consideration of this is a speciall meanes to support the people of God against discouragements, and droopings in looking upon sins, & failings: seeing we serve so good a master that is not rigorous, and severe, as some earthly Masters are, that all their poore diligent servants can do will not please them: but our Master is of a sweete nature, passing by the infirmities, and accepting the sincere indeavours of his servants, and that with commendation.

3 Use.

Hence we should be greatly encouraged in all well doing, and be the more diligent, and industrious to please God in all things: an ingenuous, and good nature will do more for love than for feare, a servant though but morally honest, and of a good disposition will do more for a mild Master that beares with him, than if he were harsh, and hard to please: The Cords of love and kindnesse will draw a man of an honest mind in the way of obedience faster than scourges can drive him.

4 Use.

We should set this before us as a patterne for our imitation: if God be so kind and forbearing towards us, betwene whom there is such an infinite distance, shall not we mete the same measure towards our fellow brethren? it is the use the Apostle makes of the same doctrine, *1 Joh. 4. 11. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another*: Let us beare with one anothers infirmities, and take notice of all the good we can in each other. This is to be like God.

Shall God forgive Talents of sins. to us, and shall not we forgive a few pence to our brethren? See the reproofe and punishment of the want of this duty, *Matth. 18. 32. 33.* Consider the sweet exhortation of the Apostle to this purpose, *Eph. 4. 23. Be ye kin*

kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christs sake hath forgiven you.

The eightieth Observation in Nature.

FRUIT-trees bring forth their fruits in their seasons; some at one time, some at another, some sooner, some later in sommer, and Autumne: every kind observes the Law of Nature which God hath fixed in them in respect of times and seasons of bearing fruits.

From hence we may observe: That

Trees of the Lords planting bring forth fruits seasonably.

*Proposition
shadowed.*

All that are branches of the true Vine doe not only bring forth good fruits, and by the purging, and ordering of the husbandman bring forth much good fruit, *John 15. 2.* but also they bring forth good fruit *in due season*: good fruits brought out *unseasonably* loose thereby much of their beauty, and goodnesse: therefore observe the *season*.

The Prophet *David* describing a Godly man, one of his properties is this, *he brings forth his fruit in due season, Psal. 1. 3.* Solomon saies, a foole utters all his mind, but a wise man keeps it in till afterwards: *Prov. 29. 7.* A wise man brings forth the fruit of his lips *seasonably*.

The voice of a foole is in the multitude of words; while others are speaking, that's no good season, but a man should stay and wait for a fit time, for an opportunity, when his words may be heard, yea, and when the minds of the hearers are best prepared to hear such, or such a truth, when its most like to take impression: Believers have spirituall wisdome, wisdome from above, *Esay. 50. 4.* The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I might know how to speake a word in season to him that is weary. Though this be principally meant of Christ the head, yet his members have from him the same spirit of wisdome to speake *seasonably* to weary soules, and to speake in the cause of God, when there is occasion and season.

This is to admonish every one to consider, and observe the *season*, the *fittest season* for every duty, looking unto God for direction

tion therein. This will be much to the beauty, and worth of them: *Every thing is beautifull in his season: To every thing there is a season, Eccl. 3. 1.* Circumstances commonly make or marre things: and sometimes that which is a duty, as to the substance, and matter, is turn'd into sin in respect of the manner, and time of performance: so that this is of very great consequence, to observe a due season in duties, *Prov. 15. 23. A word spoken in season, how good is it! it is like Apples of gold, in pictures of silver, Prov. 25. 11.*

The husbandman looks, and calls for fruits in their season, *Mar. 12. 2. At the season he sent a servant that he might receive of the fruits of the vineyard, So Mat 21. 41.*

We ought in private meetings to consider what discourse is most *seasonable*: what questions, exhortations, reproofs, are most suitable, and *seasonable*, and accordingly apply our selves: our spirits at some seasons are farre more apt to receive impressions than at other times.

Now therefore we should be *seasonable* in publique and private duties; but some take little heed to this, when the subjects they hold forth in Sermons suite neither with persons nor things (to which they ought to apply their doctrine, if they will speake *seasonably*) but are like snow in harvest, or singing songs to an heavy heart. Many things materially good, for want of due circumstances and *seasonablenesse* in performance are of little worth.

Those doctrines in publique, and discourses and duties in private, which are not only agreeable to the word in generall, but also concur with and carry on Gods maine designs in the generation we live in, such fruits are *seasonable* fruits, otherwise (though good in themselves) they are not *seasonable*; Also when the word is so divided as to give to every one his portion, and application is made to particular, and different cases and Conditions of persons, then these fruits are *seasonably* brought forth.

The eightie first Observation in Nature.

FRUIT-trees yeild forth their fruits, as well to the wicked as the godly: The unholy and profane do yearly eat, and drinke of their fruits and have profits, and advantages by them as well as the most holy.

This shadowes out unto us: That

The godly are profitable not only one to another, but the wicked *Proposition shadowed.* also faire the better for them.

They that feare God have great and precious promises made to them concerning the good things of this life, as well as of the life to come, which God performeth to them as he sees is best for them, of which outward good things the wicked (who grow amongst them as Tares amongst the Wheate) are partakers.

Also, being partakers of the divine nature, and having the spirit of their heavenly father dwelling in them, they imitate God in some measure, who doth good to the just, and unjust, and lets his raine fall, and sun shine upon the wicked, and the good, *Matth. 5. 25.* They do good to all, according to the command, *Gal. 6. 10.* and that of *Matth. 5. 44.* Love your enemies, blesse them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.

Wicked men shure both of privative, and positive blessings among the godly: Even *Sodom* was spared for a time, while righteous *Lot* was among them. How many fared the better for *Josephs* sake?

David was kind to churlish *Nabal*, in keeping his Cattle from spoile while he remained by them.

Laban was blessed (in outward things) for *Jacobs* sake, *Gen. 30. 27.* *Potiphar* and his house, *Pharaoh* and all *Egypt* fared the better for *Joseph*, *Gen. 39. 5.* and *41. &c.*

Also they reprove, exhort, and admonish the ungodly, as well as the godly, they give, and lend, and doe good not only to them that will do good and lend, and give to them, but also to their enemies: if their enemy hunger they will feede him, if he thirst they will give him drinke.

1 Use.

Hence we may take notice of the noble, and excellent nature of Gods people, in that they do good to all; to those who do hurt to them. the ungodly are not so: *the righteous is more excellent than his (carnall) neighbour*, Prov. 12. 26 and Prov. 17. 27. *He is of an excellent spirit*. Herein he holds forth some resemblance of the Nature of God his father, who does good to the just, and unjust.

2 Use.

We may also hence take occasion to observe the basenesse, and unworthinesse of the spirits of ungodly persons, who hate the righteous, notwithstanding all their love; they returne evill for Good, *Psal. 109. 4. for my love they are mine adversaries*. This is the highest aggravation of mans sin against God, to sin against love, against mercy, and kindnesse. God calls Heaven and Earth to wonder at it, *Esay 1. 2. Here O Heavens, and give eare O Earth, &c. I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me*, so (in a proportion) is the sin aggravated in respect of men: it is the highest ingratitude to returne hate, for love, evill for good.

The eightie second Observation in Nature.

Some fruit trees are slow in bearing fruits, many yeares passe ere they beare any considerable quantity of fruits; but notwithstanding the husbandman does not presently cut them downe, but prunes them, diggs about them, waters, and orders them from yeare to yeare, and waits for their fruits.

This shadowes out unto us this Proposition: That

Proposition
shadowed.

When men are slow in the duties of obedience, God is patient towards them, and in the use of all meanes waits for their fruitfulnessse.

God is the great Husbandman of his Vineyard the Church, and having many fruit trees in it, he prunes, orders, and gives them convenient culture from yeare to yeare, by his word, spirit, Ministres, Providences, favours, frownes, Chastisements, and all meanes, and lookes every one should be fruit-full under all his dispensations

ons; And yet so it is, that many are unfruitfull, or beare but few, and small fruits; though God expect much, they returne but little, now, notwithstanding God of his infinite patience carries and waites upon them for their fruits. Many yeares did the Lord waite for the fruits of Repentance from the old world, 1 Pet. 3. 20. *The long suffering of God waited in the daies of Noah, And Esay 30. 18. The Lord will wait that he may be gracious.* He Plants, and waters, and prunes, and dresses his fruit-trees, and then waits for their fruits in their seasons, Luke 13. 7. *These three yeares I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree.* God cuts not downe fruit-trees suddenly for their unfruitfulnesse, but sends his word, and spirit, and causeth the dewes, and raine of Heaven to fall upon them in manifold mercies, and Providences, and then waits for, and expects fruits. God is (as the Apostle saith 2 Pet. 3. 9.) *Long suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

This should make us observe, and admire the abundant kindnesse and love of God towards us, that God who is infinite in power, wisdom, justice, and absolute of himselfe, having no need at all of his Creatures, and in a moment able to bring to nought whatsoever shall oppose him, shall yet wait upon his Creatures, as if he had some need of them, or expected some advantage by them, whereas it is for our profit and advantage: he is indulgent towards his Children, bearing with them, Ps. 103. when they beare some good fruits, he purgeth and pruneth them, that they may bring forth more fruits, Iohn. 15. 5.

Yea, he is long suffering towards all, looking that the riches of his goodnesse, and forbearance, and long suffering should lead them to Repentance, Rom 2. 4. and make them to bring forth fruits worthy amendment of life.

Hence we should learne to be thus minded on towards another, especially such as are *Ministers of the Gospell, Masters, Governours, Tutors,* they should (herein) be followers of God as deare children, Eph. 5. 1. though their expectations; and desires be not answered, in the profiting and growth of those under their charge, yet they should not be discouraged, but wait still, and prune, and dresse, and order their young plants still, waiting till their profiting appeare, as

1 Use.

2 Use.

the Husbandman waiteth for the fruit of the Earth, and hath long patience for it, James 5.7.

3 Use.

If God be so patient towards us, and waits on us, shall not wee be content to waite on God? God waiteth for the fruits of our obedience, O let us wait for the performance of his promises: For they that wait for him shall never be ashamed: that is, they shall obtaine at length above their expectation, Esay. 64. 4. Since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the eare, neither hath the eye seene, O God! besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

The eightie third Observation in Nature.

Wild materiall fruittrees have no power to engraft themselves, but grow from year to year, according their wild nature, and bring forth sower, and naughty fruits, neither is there any possibility that such Trees should ever be engrafted, and bear good fruits, without the skill, and paines of the Husbandman.

Proposition
shadowed.

This is another Similitude of the state of Mysticall Fruit-trees, and shadowes out unto us this Proposition: That

Unregenerate persons (of themselves) cannot come to Christ, nor bring forth one good fruit.

Naturally every one is dead in sin, and hath no more power to come to Christ, or do one good worke, than a dead Carcase hath to walke, or worke, Job. 6. 44. No man can come to me except the father which hath sent me draw him.

The Naturall fruittree can as soone graft it selfe as any soule move towards Christ, without the power of the spirit of God: The heart of man by nature hath no other but corrupt Principles in it, which all the time of unregeneracy daily grow stronger, and stronger, which are not only altogether indisposed to all that is good, but also oppose it, and contradict the motions of the spirit. As they are alive to all that is evill, so they are dead to holinesse; there is no more power in the soule (by nature) to move towards Christ, than there is in a stone. to move upwards of it selfe.

What

What is lesse than to have a good thought of, or towards God? and yet that we have not without the spirit, 2 Cor. 3. 5. *Not that we are sufficient of our selves to thinke any thing, as of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God.*

This shewes us the sad and wofull estate of persons out of Christ, and out of the election of grace, there is no possibility of their escaping hell, they are as fast bound in the chaines of naturall corruption, as the Devils are in the Chaines of darknesse, in which they are reserved unto the Judgment of the great day: such have their Portion in this life, even all the good things they are like to have. Little reason then had David, (or any of the people of God in their greatest sufferings) to envy the prosperity of the wicked: He counted himselfe foolish for so doing when he saw their end, Psalm. 92. 7. *When the Wicked Spring as the Grasse, and the Workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever.*

Here also we may see the Error of those who hold free will: that a naturall man hath power of himselfe to move and come to Christ, this is contrary to the doctrine of Christ, and takes away his glory from him, as might be shewed at large.

This is, and will be a continuall ground of love to God (to all eternity) in the hearts of his people, they being drawn to Christ, and fixed upon him by faith, it is the spirit that hath donne it, we contributed nothing to the worke, but it is an effect of free Election love in God: therefore let us shew forth the praises of God in a holy, and fruitfull Conversation. for he that hath begun a good worke will perfect it unto the day of Iesus Christ, Phil. 1. 6.

1 Use.

2 Use.

3 Use.

The eightie fourth Observation in Nature.

Some Fruit-trees (if they be not carefully looked unto will break out, and the sap will presse upwards in some few branches only, or chiefly, and leave other branches with little sap, which grow poorly, and weakly, and some die; whereas a well ordered Tree should spread, and enlarge it selfe in all the Branches.

This Observation shadowes out unto us, That

Some

Proposition
shadowed.

Some Christians chiefly pursue some particular duties belonging to them, and neglect others.

Works and actions of spirituall fruit-trees may be considered as *Branches*, as well as *seeds*, or *fruits*.

Some persons (as experience makes too manifest) are very careful, and diligent about *some particular duties*, which they carry on from day to day: and its well they do so, because *those things they ought to do*: but there are other duties (perhaps equally as convenient, or necessary to be done) which are altogether, or very much neglected, they shoot forth in *some branches*, but *not in all*: they are content to do some small, and easy things suitable to their natures, and ends, while they neglect great and substantiall matters: our Saviour reproves such, *Mat. 23. 23. Ye have omitted the weightier matters of the Law, judgment, mercy and faith, these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

Some Christians are all (or most) for *publique duties*, and very much neglect the *private*; they heare (it may be) three or foure Sermons on the Lords day (in this place) and often on other days (and they are to be encouraged in frequent hearing the word) but yet many such neglect (or slightly performe) *private duties* of Prayer, meditation, examination of the heart, and particular application of the word, without which much hearing is to little purpose. The heart of man is deceitfull, and Satan is deceitfull, and both will be ready enough to perswade and carry on to *publique duties* all the day (seeing they will needs be religious) that so they may be hindred of greater spirituall advantages, in *neglecting the private duties* aforementioned, which are absolutely necessary to a Christians growth in grace.

Some other Professors are diligent in duties *publique*, and *private*, in reference to themselves, but neglect duties in reference to others; as *Exhortation, Reproofe, distributing to their necessities, visiting them* sometimes (especially in their afflictions) herein they faile much: although these are the *great and weighty duties* of Christians: for if we faile in the great duties of love and charity towards our fellow members, what do we, wher's our Religion? Pure Religion, and undefiled before God, even the father is this, to visit the fatherlesse and widdowes in their afflictions, &c. *James 1. 27.*

See what our Saviour saies of these duties, *Matth. 25. 36. Magistrate ought not only to restraine, and punish what is to Gods dishonour,*

honour, but also to *contrive, stand for, and uphold* what is acceptable to him.

Ministers of the Gospell ought not only to preach the Gospell in the *publique congregation*, but also to take all occasions in *private* to exhort, rebuke, instruct, and encourage the people in the things of God, to be *instant in season and out of season*, inquiring how the worke of grace goes on in the hearts of their people, and to *know their state* (which Paul so much enquired after, in his owne person, and by others, that he might speak, and write more sutable to their conditions) *Phil. 2. 19. Col. 4. 8.* how Sathan works, what dispensations they have from God, and to learne experiences from them; studying men, as they study books, by which course they may become wise, and skillfull workmen, and know those waies and workings of God, of Sathan, of Grace and Corruption, which otherwise they can never know.

Pastors of congregations have a strict charge, *Acts 20. 28. Take heed to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers*: Now to oversee the Church imports more than only to Preach in publique, that is but a part of their worke: A speciall care should be had of the different state of particular persons.

This should put us upon Examination what works and duties God requires of us in our generall, and particular Callings, that knowing them, we may observe one as well as another, and have respect to *all Gods Commands*. Let us not suffer one duty to justle out another, which is frequent among Christians: Many think if they are still doing what is good, and about the worke of God, they look not so much about them, nor consider what is necessary *besides*, or what is *more necessary* and profitable, and so many times neglect the maine worke. They let some branches of duties wither, and dye, while the sap and strength of the Tree presseth forth, and spends it selfe in other branches lesse fruitfull.

Use.

The eightie fith Observation in Nature.

WHile fruit-trees remaine ungrafted, all the labour, and culture, the husbandman can bestow upon them will not make them bring forth good fruits, though they grow in the best place of the Garden, and be waired, pruned, and ordered never so well, yet because they are ungrafted, and wild trees, they will beare sower and noughty fruits.

This is another Similitude of the state of spirituall fruit-trees, and shadowes out unto us this Proposition: That

Proposition
shadowed.

While persons remaine in an unregenerate state, all the meanes of grace is unprofitable to them.

Many make a profession, who yet have nothing of the power of godlinesse: they attend the Ordinances, they heare the word, pray, have priviledges among the Saints yet bring forth no good fruit. Judgments, Mercies, favours, outward providences, inward workings of the spirit by reprooves, counsells, inlightnings, &c. all is in vaine to them, they cannot receive these things, nor profit by them, because not engrafted, they reject the word, Psal. 50. 17. *Thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee;* And Heb. 4. 2. *The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*

And as they reject the word, so also they resist the spirit, Acts 7. 51. *Ye do alwaies resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye.* Yea Judgments, and punishments are ineffectuall to them, Esay 9. 13. *The people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seeke the Lord of Hosts, Amos 4. 9. I have smitten you with blasting, and mildew, &c. yet ye have not returned unto mee, saith the Lord: I have sent among you pestilence, and ye have not returned unto me. And vers. 11. I have overbrowne some of you &c. yet ye have not returned unto mee, saith the Lord.*

So we see all that God doth for, or against persons out of Christ, all the meanes of grace is unprofitable to them; they neglect the mercies of God, reject the word, spirit, Judgments of God; and all the

the reprooves, admonitions, Counsels, Exhortations, and Examples of his people.

Hence we see the miserable condition of persons out of Christ, *1 Use.* seeing *nothing will do good upon them*: would it not be accounted a heavy curse, if the Lands of some men should bring forth nothing but *bryers, thorns, and weeds*, with all the good husbandry that could be bestowed on them, with *raine, sunne, and dewes*, when by the same meanes, other mens grounds are made fruitfull? this *spirituall curse* upon the soules of unregenerate persons is infinitely greater: such (without Repentance) are *nigh unto cursing*, and everlasting burnings, *Heb. 6. 8.*

Labour then with all thy might to get this evidence of Regeneration, even to thrive, and profit by the meanes of grace. *2 Use.*

The eightie fixt Observation in Nature.

Fruit-trees when they prosper well, and grow in a decent, comly forme, and bring forth much good fruit, as they do profit many, so also hereby they credit the husbandman, they bring some reputation to him who orders them; but if they grow poorly, and bring forth little, they discredit their keeper.

This teacheth us this Lesson: That *Christians by walking holily, and fruitfully, they bring much honour to God, but if other wise, dishonour.* *Proposition shadowed.*

Every one of the people of God that professeth Christ, is as a City upon a hill, as our Saviour said of his disciples, and therefore their waies are seen, and observed by all sorts of persons, so that if they walke wisely, circumspectly, and fruitfully, they bring honour to God, and credit to their profession, *Matth. 5. 16. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works; and glorifie your father which is in heaven: And againe, 1 Pet. 2. 12. having your conversation honest among the Gentiles &c. they may by your good works which they shall behold glorify God in the day of visitation.*

But if on the contrary professors walke loosely, and negligently, these things reflect upon God, to his dishonour: As a servant to

a great person, if he behave himselſe licentiousſly by drunkenneſſe, ſwearing, and the like it reflects (in ſome ſort) upon his Maſter, who keeps ſuch a perſon in his houſe. So it is betweene God and his people: if they walke circumspectly, in a holy and fruitfull converſation they *glorifie the name of God* to whom they have relation, but if they walke vainely, and looſely, if they walke in *pride, minding earthly things* (the two grand ſins of many profeſſours in our times) ſcraping, and holding together the traſh of the world, as though there were no better things to be had in the waies of God, then they cauſe *the name of God to be blaſphemed*, his waies to be ſcandalized, and the generation of his children to be reproached, *the name of God is blaſphemed through you, Rom. 2. 24. James 2. 7.*

I Use.

Let ſuch as profeſſe Chriſt depart from iniquity, and labour after a *holy and fruitfull converſation: for Job. 15. 8. Herein is my father glorified that ye bring forth much fruit.*

I verily believe, God hath more honour, Religion and the Goſpell more credit, by ſome one of his people (meane and deſpiſed, it may be, in the eye of a corrupt mind) than by an hundred others, who yet may have grace to bring them to heaven: therefore let us ſtrive to out go one another in *bringing honour to God by a holy and heavenly converſation.*

The eightie ſeventh Obſervation in Nature.

IF a Grafted tree, and a Wild ungraſted tree grow neere together, both of them ſucking one and the ſame juyce of the Earth, the one converts it into good ſap, and nourishment, and conſequently into good and wholeſome fruits; the other turnes the ſame juyce of the Earth into ſower, bitter, and it may be (as in ſome kinds) into poiſonous fruits; and this is from the different Formes, and Natures of the Trees.

Propoſition
Shadowed.

This ſhadowes out unto us this Propoſition: That
The ſame things which are bleſſings to the Godly, are curſes to the wicked, becauſe of their different Principles:

The

The *righteous* and the *wicked* dwell together, they are mixed as the *Wheate* and *Tares*, *Flowers* or *Weeds* in a *Garden*; and both for the most part, are partakers of the same outward priviledges, but to them that are in *Christ*, *all things worke together for their good*, *Rom. 8. 28.* To the pure *all things are pure*, but to the unbelieving there is *nothing pure*, *Tit. 1. 15.* A godly man does not only draw sweetnesse out of things that are of themselves sweet, out of the *word*, *Ordinances*, *Christ*, and his people, but also even out of things that are bitter, as *Crosses*, *afflictions*, *Temptations*, *Trials*, to him out of the strongest comes sweetnesse.

But now a wild ungrafted tree, a person out of *Christ*, he is like the *Spider* that sucks poyson out of the sweetest flowers, the best things, become evill to him; *blessings become curses*; his *health*, *strength*, *liberty*, *riches*, *honours*, *friends*, *gifts*, *Learning*, &c. all these become snares unto him, he makes use of them to his owne hurt, drawes nothing out of them but *sin*, and *death*. Their *Table* becomes a *snares* to them, and that which should have beene for their welfare, it becomes a *Trap*, *Psal. 69. 22.*

Yea, all *spirituall things* prove for their greater condemnation, they despise the riches of *Gods* grace, and turne it into wantonnesse, *Jude 4.* and therefore treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath; The very *Gospell* it selfe (which is the power of *God* to *salvation*, and the *savour* of *life* unto *life* to them who are in *Christ*) these wild *Plants* suck no sweetnesse out of it, but to them it is the *savour* of *death* unto *death*, *2 Cor. 2. 16.*

Yea, the greatest Gift that ever was bestowed on the sonnes of men, *Iesus Christ* (out of whom the branches ingrafted into him, draw sweetnesse, sap and life, marrow and fatnesse, wine and water of life) he is not sweete to them, but contrariwise an offence: *Christ crucified* is to them a *stumbling block*, and *foolishnesse*, *1 Cor. 1. 23.* *Christ*, his *word*, his *Ordinances*, his people, his *mercies*, *judgments*, all his things are perverted, and abused by them.

Hence we may see and admire the free distinguishing love of *God* towards his owne people, who maketh such a difference betweene them and others; so that *all things*, even the worst things are good to them, they draw virtue from them; but *all things*, even the best things, are evill to the wicked, they draw poyson and death out of them.

1 U/e.

Seeing that by reason of the *corrupt nature* in the wicked they draw evill out of what is good, and that all things are abused by them to their owne destruction; this should caution us alwaies to beware of their *Opinions, Judgments, & practises*: though they be never so eminent in parts, and learning, and bring Scripture to back them, yet suspect all, for they cannot see nor discern; their minds and consciences are defiled, they suck not the marrow of truth out of the word, but they *pervert it to their owne destruction*, 2Pet. 1. 16. they draw poyson, corrupt doctrine out of the pure, and wholsome wells of salvation.

Therefore our *Saviour* warned his disciples to take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and Sadduces: which was their doctrine, Mat. 16. 6, 12. The word which is as the Pillar of fire, and discovers to the people of God their way, is but a *darke Cloud* to them, Exo. 14. 30. they stumble at the word, yea at *Christ himselfe*, 1Pet. 2. 8. *A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, &c.*

The eightie eighth Observation in Nature.

THe best fruit-trees have some fautes, and defects, are subject to Cankers, Mossiness, and other diseases, to luxurious growthes: some years they beare but few fruits, and many of them small, and perhaps spotted, or chapt, or otherwise imperfect.

This shadowes out unto us this Proposition. That
Proposition shadowed. The best of Gods Children are guiltie of many sins and infirmities in their conversations.

We know there are two Natures continually working and striving in every regenerate person, and sometimes the *flesh* prevails very much, and the *graces of the spirit* are clouded, and obscured by it in the *best men*.

Moses spake unadvisedly with his lips, Psal. 106 33: *Aaron* made an Idol for the people. *David* fained himselfe mad, 1Sam. 21. 13. he numbred the people contrary to the minde of God, he committed adultery, and murther, and sinned in many other respects. *Paul and Barnabas* contended together, and parted,
Acts

*Acts 13. Job and Jeremia*h cursed the day of their birth, *Jerem.* 20.14. *Jonah* was very angry without cause, *Chap.* 4.1.

We need not multiply particulars, the *Experience* of the people of God makes this too manifest, who say with *Paul*, *Rom.* 7.15. *that which I doe, I allow not, for what I would, that do I not, but what I hate that do I, vers.* 19. *The evil which I would not that I do, Jam.* 3.2. *In many things we offend all.*

The consideration of this should humble all the people of God, seeing we carry about with us a *corrupt Nature*, and can by no means be rid of it.

1 Use.

This should make every one of us watchfull, and circumspect against sin, and all enemies, for if the tallest Cedars, and strongest Oakes have beene bowed, and brought downe, how shall the weak Plant resist, but by drawing continually sap and strength from the Roote, and walking closely with God?

2 Use.

The consideration of this Proposition may be a means to stay the spirit of a weak Christian, who is discouraged in looking upon his sin, and corruption, whatsoever is written, is written for our learning, that we through patience & comfort of the Scriptures might have hope: this is one cause why the faults, and sins of the Saints of old are recorded.

3 Use.

Take heed of too much admiring the *best men*; there is dresse mixed with their purest mettles: It is an error therefore in some persons, who take all for granted that some (whom they admire) deliver in their Sermons, or otherwise, and that follow their *Judgements* and *Examples* because *theirs*: Let us try all things and hold fast that which is good, *1 Thes.* 5.2.

4 Use.

The eightie ninth Observation in Nature.

WE see materiall fruit-trees that are ungrafted (wild trees) as forward to bring forth their sower, and naughty fruits, as the grafted trees are to bring forth their good fruits. Crab-trees and others (of the worst kinds) are as forward (in the spring) in blossoming, and shooting forth, as grafted trees of the best kinds.

This

This is another *Similitude* of the state of *spirituall fruit-trees*, and shadowes out unto us this *Proposition*, which also concurs with the word and *Experience*: That

Proposition
shadowed.

Carnall persons are as forward, and zealous in the waies of sin, as (usually) the godly are in the Waies of holinesse.

All people are carried on in those waies that are sutable to their *Principles*, whether spirituall, or carnall: *Papists* (& other superstitious persons) are as zealous in their waies, as usually men fearing God are in Gods waies.

The Idolatrous people mentioned, *Jer. 44.* were very zealous, and earnest in worshiping their false gods, insomuch that when the *Prophet* from God told them the danger thereof, and that it would be no lesse than destruction to them if they continued so to provoke God, their spirits rose against him, they answered him boldly, and stoutly, with one consent, *vers. 16. 17.* *The word that thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not heare it of thee, but wee will doe whatsoever commeth out of our owne mouth: as to burne incense to the Queene of heaven, and to powre out drinke offerings unto her, as wee have done, both wee and our fathers, our Kings and our Princes.*

So were the worshipers of *Baal* earnest and forward in calling upon their *Idoll*, cutting and lancing themselves: And the people of *Ephesus*, *Acts. 19.* how earnest were they for upholding their *Diana*? *vers. 28.* *They were full of wrath, and cryed out, saying, great is Diana of the Ephesians: and the whole City was full of confusion, and they rushed into the Common place with one consent, &c. So vers. 24.*

How vehemently earnest have we seene carnall persons for upholding the *booke of Common-prayer*, receiving the *Lords Supper* at *Easter* &c? Wherein they will not be hindered, an experiment whereof we had lately of some grossly ignorant persons, who were prevented at one place from receiving the *sacrament of the supper* from the hand of a profane Minister, they went after him the same day, to another place, wading through the waters (which then by reason of great raine overflowed the banks) to come to him, out of their blind zeale not knowing what they did.

And

and for all *superstitious customes, feastings, may-games, merry meetings,* and such like: who amongst the godly are more forward, and ready in the waies of God, than these kind of persons are in these waies of sin?

Now the reason of this is, because the waies of sin are agreeable and *suabie to the Nature of carnall persons*; and Secondly: because *Sathan workes mightily in the spirits of such persons, to stirre them up, and to carry them on in carnall courses; especially in any thing which hath in it but the least shew of good.*

The consideration of this should make regenerate persons ^{1 Use.} to take shame to themselves, That they who have the *Commands of God, Divine Principles, the holy spirit, the glory of God, the welfare of others, an eternall inheritance &c.* to carry them on and encourage them, should yet be *no more forward and zealous in the the waies of God, then ungodly ones are in the waies of sin*: O it should humble us greatly that we are so dull, cold, and formall, that we have no more zeale, spirit, and life in the *pleasant, and holy waies of Gods* that we are no more forward to bring forth *sweete, wholesome and pleasant fruits to God,* than wicked men are to bring forth *poysenous, and deadly fruits.*

It is an intollerable shame to some professors especially, to see them so likewarme, and unactive in the waies of God, when power is in their hand to act for God, and his people, they move slowly, and feebly in his cause: wicked men are (commonly) more zealous and active in the service of *Sathan and their lusts*, then Gods people are in the service of the *living and true God.*

This is a thing greatly to be bewailed by us.

The ninetieth Observation in Nature.

THere is great difference in the dimensions, or bignesse of fruit-trees: some are very high, and large trees; others but low and small: some are huge, strong trees, others but weak and slender; some growing upon more barren grounds, they can never attaine that bignesse, as others that grow upon strong fertill grounds: yet the husbandman ordereth, and preserveth all of them.

This is another *Similitude of the state of Mysticall fruit-trees,* and shadowes out unto us this Proposition. That

The conditions of the people of God are much different, yet God careth for them all.

Proposition
shadowed.

The state of the children of God is very various, whether we consider them in *Naturall, civill, morall, and spirituall* respects: some are young, some old; some of weake, some of strong constitutions of body; some but of weake and low naturall parts and abilities of mind, others of eminent gifts and endowments; some of poor and meane estates, and live much upon contribution, others are rich, and great in the world; some are low and weake in grace, *babes in Christ*, others are *strong men, fathers, &c.* yet yet God careth and provideth for them all, his love is towards all. *Rich Abraham* and *poore Lazarus* are both beloved of God: some are in great esteeme and reputation generally among the people (as *Cornelius*) *Acts 10. 22. A man of good report among all the Nation of the Jewes*; others lie in contempt, and dishonour: some have great measures of grace, as the woman of Canaan, *Matth. 13. 28. O woman great is thy faith: so the Centurion, Luk. 7. 9. I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel*. Others have but a weake faith, *Matth. 8. 26. O ye of little faith: So Matth. 16. 8. O ye of little faith: in some grace is but as a graine of Mustard-seede, in some others it is grown high and strong: Steph. n was a man full of faith, Acts 6. 5.*

So of *Love* and other graces: some have much, others but little: *Simon*, mentioned *Luk. 7. 40.* had but a little love to our Saviour; but *Mary* loved much: so of *knowledge, zeale, &c.*

We see the state of Gods people is very different in all respects, yet the care of God is for all: *1 Pet. 5. 7. Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you.* And againe; speaking of his *Vineyard the Church, Esay 27. 3. I the Lord do keepe it, I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it: I will keepe it night and day.*

Now God careth for one as well as the another, because all cost a like price, *the precious blood of Christ*, and all are *Members of his sonne*: a man cares for, and cherisheth all his *Members*; so Christ.

I Use.

This is a ground of great Consolation to all the people of God, though meane in the world, though sick in body, of low esteeme, poore in estate, though weake in Gifts and graces, yet be
not

not discouraged at all these: for being within the wall, or pale of the Church, the orchard, or Vineyard of God, he preserveth them; the same skilfull and carefull hand that pruneth, watereth, and ordereth the strongest, and greatest trees, does the same (really) to the least: Yea his care is especially to his weake plants, because they are most liable to hurt, and danger.

Secondly: such as differ from their brethren in being more eminent in *Naturall, morall or spirituall* endowments, if they have *many Talents*, let such often consider who made them to differ, and beware of despising, or neglecting the *lower Saints*; and beare with the infirmities of the weake, *Rom. 15. 1.* and be ready to distribute, willing to communicate in *temporals*, and *spirituals*, as good stewards of the manifold gifts, and graces of God, *1 Pet. 4. 10.* and be therein like unto their heavenly Father, in caring for the low-est, and meanest.

The ninetie first Observation in Nature.

THe husbandman frequently walks among his fruit-trees, and viewes, and considers them; he takes notice how it is with particulars: If any of them be weake, and diseased, and thrive not as others, he considers the cause, and sets himselfe to the cure: As it is with them he applies himselfe accordingly to wards them.

This shadowes out unto us: That

True and faithfull Ministers of the Gospell do diligently looke into the state of their people, and deale with them accordingly.

*Proposition
shadowed.*

Ministers of the Gospell are imployed by God about his husbandry, which is his Church and people, *1 Cor. 3. 9. ye are Gods husbandry.* And the Apostle saies we are laborers together with God in this worke.

Now carefull husbandmen are still looking into the state of their worke, how it is in this, and that, and the other particular, that so they may diligently apply themselves; so doe faithfull Ministers towards their people.

They are also Shepheards, and it is the duty of Shepheards to watch over their flocks, and to consider, and diligently to observe

observe how it is with particular sheepe, and to apply themselves accordingly: so do true and faithfull Ministers; according to that in Prov. 27. 23. *Be diligent to know the state of thy flockes, and looke well to thy heards:* God gives a very strict charge to Ministers of the Gospell, Acts 20. 28. *Take heed unto your selves, and to all the flock over the which the holy Ghost hath made you Overseers, &c.*

To take heed to the flock, and to oversee it, implies a speciall care to looke into, and to examine, and consider the state, and condition of particulars, as well as to have an eye over them in the generall: So the Apostle useth the same word thrice in one Chapter, Heb. 13. 7. *them that have the Oversight of you:* and vers. 17. *them that have the Oversight of you:* and againe vers. 24. *them that have the Oversight of you;* Though another translation hath it, *them that have the rule over you:* but his seemes to carry in it that Lordly power and dominion which Christ will not allow any of his Ministers over his people; he hath not set them as Lords over Gods heritage, 1 Pet. 5. 3. *But Overseers, and Examples to the flocke;* which is also agreeable to the words of the holy Ghost in Acts 20. 28. *the holy ghost hath made them Overseers:* which carries in it more of care, and labour, than of authority and rule; according to that of the Apostle, 2 Cor. 4. 5. *Our selves your servants for Jesus sake.*

This is also further confirmed by the same word which the Apostle Peter useth, 1 Pet. 5. 2. *Feed the flocke of God which is among you, taking the Oversight thereof.*

Now certainly this word so often used carries more in it, than only to Preach the Gospell. And this is also more confirmed by the Example of the Apostle Paul; fully set forth in many places, who did not only preach and write to the Churches, but also did often enquire, and send to know their state, yea, he went himselfe to particular Churches, and families, and Persons, to whom he had preached to see, and consider, and know how it was with them, 1 Thes. 3. 5. *I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, &c.* And when he heard they stood fast in the faith, it was matter of great consolation to him, and of many thanksgivings unto God on their behalfe, vers. 9, and Col. 4. 8. *he sent Tychicus to know their state.*

So also he sent Timothy for the same purpose, *Phil. 2. 19. That I also may be of good comfort when I know your state.* He calls upon Barnabas to goe with him to visit poore soules, *Acts 15. 36. Let us go againe, and visit our brethren in every City where we have preached the Word of the Lord, and see how they doe.*

Yes Paul earnestly prayed for opportunities to performe this duty, he longed to see, and conferre with the Saints to whom he had preached, *Rom. 1. 9, 10, 11. & Rom. 15. 23, 24 without ceasing I make mention alwaies in my Prayers, making request to come unto you, for I long to see you, &c.*

Now the Reasons why Ministers of the Gospell ought not only to preach the Gospell but also to consider, and enquire into the spirituall states and conditions of their People: First,

That so they may be instructed more perfectly in the deepe Mysteries of the kingdome of God; they may hereby come to be acquainted with the various methods, waies, and workings of the spirit of God in the hearts of his people, & the wiles, & depthes of Sathan; with the nature of grace, and; corruption. Ministers should study men, as they study books although they may come to know the generall Nature of these things from the Scriptures, Books, & their owne particular experiences, yet unlesse they take in this also, to converse frequently with others, and looke into their states they can never be so able to deale with soules as they should be.

Many content themselves with some few particular Cases, and Instances mentioned in scripture concerning Job, David, Heman and some others, and scarce looke further, measuring all others most commonly by these, as not being (indeed) acquainted with the various, and different dealings of God with his people.

Secondly: By looking into the particular state of their people, they may speake more suitably, and seasonably to them; when they know their particular Lusts, and corruptions, their Temptations, Cases, doubts, &c. their degrees of knowledg, and other graces, they may then apply the word more properly and effectually, than otherwise they can upon all occasions: As Physicians when they have enquired into, and know the state of their Patients, may administer Physicke more effectually than otherwise they can. So Though Ministers may speake many good things, generall truths according to the Scriptures, yet they may be, and are many times

See Mr Baxsters exhortations unto this duty; discourse of true happiness. p. 220. 321. and Mr Fener also to same purpose.

very much besides the *particular cases* and *present concerns* of many, or most of their hearers, as not knowing their *particular states*.

I Use. By what hath beene said it is manifest, that some *Ministers* of the Gospel (even good men) do but the *one a halfe*, or but a part of their work; They preach the Gospel, but they looke not, they enquire not into the state of their people. To preach the word is not to performe the Office of an *Overseer*; nor to follow the Example of the *Apostle Paul*, shewed in all those places afore mentioned, who laid out himselfe with diligence to know the state of the people in every place where he had preached. But many thinke it sufficient to be diligent in their studies, composing of Sermons to preach in publike, laying out their time and strength that way; but greatly neglecting this other duty, of enquiring, and looking into the the particular state of soules, and applying themselves thereunto accordingly.

I speake it upon knowledge and experience, with griefe of heart and indignation against the grosse neglects of some in this matter: who have beene so farre from enquiring after the state of others, as that when poore soules have come to them to acquaint them with their doubts & feares, and troubles of spirit, they have neglected them, and given them a very slight answer, and sent them away much more burdned than before, which opportunities they should most gladly have imbraced, and have been very tender of such wounded, sick, and weary soules, and have come and sent often to them, and taken care of them as a Nurse cherisheth her Children.

2 Use. Let us blesse God (notwithstanding so many seeke their owne things, and neglect the things of Jesus Christ, Phil. 2. 21) that yet we have some Paul's & Timothies among us, who lay out themselves diligently to looke into the particular state of soules, and naturally take care for their welfare.

These are wise, and skilfull Physitians of soules, and know how to apply *sutable* and *seasonable things* to them; whereas those that neglect this duty, are but as *Emperique Physitians*, who have but only some few generall notions, which they apply in all Cases.

Let such therefore who are diligent in this worke, be encouraged to go on, as faithfull and wise stewards, to give every one his portion.

tion in due season, and they shall (in due time) receive a great Reward, *Lu. 12. 44.* even when the cheife *Shepherd* shall appeare, they shall receive a *Crown of glory* that fadeth not away, *1 Pet. 5. 4.*

The ninetie second Observation in Nature.

THe husbandman values, and approves most of those Trees, and fruits that are most for his purpose; most proper for his designe, and end that be bath in his eye: admit his great designe be to make Wine of the fruits, Cyder, Perry &c. then he likes those best, that are fittest for that use: Or if his designe be to transport them into other parts for sale, then he approves most of good, hard, lasting fruits &c. He had rather loose divers trees of other kinds, than one of those which beare fruits futable to his great end, and designe.

This shadowes out unto us: That

God discovereth a speciall care of, and love unto those of his people, whose Judgments and waies concurre with his great designes in their generation. Proposition shadowed.

In every generation God is carrying on some particular and speciall designe or other; and some of his people help on the worke more than others, some rather hinder it: they preach, and pray, and act against it (through ignorance of it, being darkned with some lusts or worldly interests) Now, though God cannot forsake any of his people, though they oppose him, yet they shall loose by it, they shall have lesse of God than others, whose Judgments and waies concurre with God in his designes.

Such of the people of God as are active for, and with God in his designes, they shall have speciall distinguishing care, and love shewed towards them, which others who neglect the worke of God, or oppose it, shall not find. Nay such are in danger, not only of losse, but also of some visible testimonies of Gods displeasure towards them, Such who fall in with Gods speciall designe in their generation shall find speciall grace & kindnesse from God; such distinguishing love *Daniel* found when he prayed, and labored so earnestly for the restoring, and enlargement of the Church, then in Captivity *Dan. 9.* which was Gods great designe then in that generation, he found

found skill, and wisdom, and understanding, which others had not: the care and love of God was eminently discovered towards him, even to a miracle in preserving him in the Lyons den, and an Angell was sent as a messenger from God, to tell him he was a man greatly beloved Chap 10. 11.

What speciall care, and love did God manifest towards Moses, who was eminently instrumentall for God (in his generation) in gods designe of bringing Israel out of Egypt, and carrying them to Canaan; Moses had peculiar honour above others of Gods people, yea, above other Prophets in his time, Numb. 12. 6, 7, 8. *If there be a Prophet among you, I the Lord will make my selfe knowne unto him in a vision, and will speake unto him in a dreame. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithfull in all my house, with him will I speake mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in darke speeches, and the Similitude of the Lord shall be beheld. Caleb, and Joshua, who followed the Lord closely, and constantly in his designe (which was the worke of their generation, of setting Israel in the promised Land) what distinguishing respect, honour and love had they above others?*

The Lord himselfe gave a testimony of them, that *they wholly followed him*, Numb. 32. 12. they possessed that good land, when others (who would not believe nor act for God in the worke of that generation) were cut off.

Other proofes and instances might be brought.

Now the reasons hereof: God gives out distinguishing mercy to his people that joyne with him in his great worke because thereby they *most please him and honour him*, and give the greatest evidence of their love to him that can be: God will reward the obedience of his peop'e in the *least, and lowest duties*, they shall not kindle a fire on his altar in vaine; nor give a Cup of cold water, nor do the least kindnesse to any of his people in vaine; but much more when they act with zeale for God in the *highest, greatest duties*, he that herein soweth plentifully (his labours and diligence) shall reape plentifully, 2 Cor. 9. 6.

Seeing this is so then let us labour to find out, and understand the *designes of God in our generation*, that so we may joine with him, and helpe to carry on the *Lords worke*: thereby great advantages will arise unto us; when through ignorance, or neglect thereof,

or

or opposition thereto, we may suffer losse of what else we might have, in the enjoyment of God, or be otherwise corrected by him.

Of this see

Now therefore: what are the *Designes of God in this our generation*, for understanding whereof we must compare *prophecies, haſt: Genera- and promiſes*, with the *viſible diſpenſations of providence* in the age *tion worke.p.* we live in, and obſerve how the *actings of God in the world ſute* 43. 46. or anſwere to what he hath foretold, or promiſed ſhould come to paſſe; & alſo inquire & obſerve what the *moſt humble, holy ſelfdenying Saints* have upon their *Spirits*, how they ſtand affected; (for God reveales his ſecrets to the *humble*, not to the *prond*, though his own people) And alſo by *frequent, and much converſing with God in walking with him*, this is beſt knowne: ſuch as have *cloſe Communion and fellowſhip* with the father, and with the ſonne, in the ſpirit, ſhall certainly know much more of his *mind, of his waies and deſignes*, than others of his people who (through ſome unmortified corruptions) walke at a diſtance from him.

But to touch breifly what we have grounds to believe is Gods *great deſigne* which he is now carrying on (more eſpecially in this generation) it is; *the enlargment of the Kingdome of his ſonne Jeſus Chriſt; the ſetting up Chriſt as King over the Nations more gloriously than ever heretofore; according to many promiſes, Eſay. 2. 11. The Lord alone ſhall be exalted in that day, and Chap. 24. 23. Zach. 14. 9. The Lord ſhall be King over all the Earth, &c.*

Now in order hereunto many other *prophecies, and promiſes* muſt be fulfilled; as thoſe concerning the *propagation of the Goſpell, and a great increaſe of the Gentile Saints (together with the coming in of the Jewes)* Eſay 60 3, 4, 5. &c. *The abundance of the Nations ſhall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles ſhall come unto thee, and many other places: Alſo union, and oneneſſe of ſpirit among the people of God, to ſerve him with one conſent, Zeph. 3. 9 pulling downe of high and lofty things, Eſay 2. 11, 12. &c. The haughtineſſe of men ſhall be bowed downe, and the Lord alone ſhall be exalted in that day. Eſtabliſhment of Juſtice, Eſay 60. 18. I will make thine Officers peace, and thine Exaltours righteouneſſe. 5. Pouring out of greater meaſures of the ſpirit, Joel 2. 28. whereby will be more, and clearer diſcoveries of Goſpell truths, Eſay 30. 26. The light of the Moone ſhall be as the light of the ſunne, and the light of the ſunne ſeven-fold.*

So that the exaltation of *Christ*, and the enlargement of his Church and Kingdome, being Gods great designe in this age, it concernes every one of his people to labour together with God in this glorious worke: such as are sincerely, and zealously active herein, shall find speciall distinguishing love from God.

Now every one of Gods people will be ready to thinke, and say; they are for *this designe*, it is their daily prayer that the *Kingdome of Christ* may be increased: but notwithstanding, certaine it is, that many even of Gods owne people afford God but little, or no helpe herein, but rather hinder, and oppose the worke (really, and indeed) through the darknesse of their Iudgments about it: (though in some respects they thinke they advance it) for such as give no encouragement to persons and things, waies, and meanes, little, and low in their eyes, which yet God hath chosen, whereby to carry on his *designes*, but rather despise them, distast, and speake against them, such may be said to hinder the worke (for he that opposeth the *meanes*, opposeth also the *End*) And this indeede is done through the prevailing of *selfe love*, and *worldly interests* which dimme their sight. such have not yet learned that great Gospell lesson of *denying all for Christ*, they have but a small measure of the spirit that *Moses, John Baptist, and Paul* had, who could be content to lay downe their owne *esteeme*, and *interests* at the feete of Christ, and be willing to decrease so that Christ might increase, by any waies or meanes that he shall chuse, persons and things, which are neglected, and despised, not only by carnall men, but also by the carnall part of spirituall men. But such shall have fewer manifestations of the love of God than others of his people that concurre with him: they shall not see, nor know so much of the mind of God, nor find their hearts so refreshed, and enlarged in communion with God, nor find so much *esteeme*, and *love* from his people as those that close with God in his great *designes*.

Numb. 11. 29.
John 3. 30.
Phil. 1. 16. 17.
18.

The ninetie third Observation in Nature.

When the husbandman intends to plant a very large Orchard, out of rough unmanured grounds (like a Wildernesse) full of bushes and wild trees where never was any before: when he resolves, and sets on such a huge and vast Plantation: such a great worke is not presently effected but by length of time; perhaps he may be many yeares about it.

This shadowes out unto us this Proposition: That God is a long time in calling the Gentiles, and implanting them into Christ, according to his purpose and promises. *Proposition shadowed.*

All the people of the world are either Jewes or Gentiles; under these two all Nations are comprehended, As we see Rom. 3. 9, 19. We have proved both Jewes, & Gentiles, that they are all under sin, v. 19. That all the World may become guilty before God.

Formerly the Jewes only were the people of God, the Gentiles were strangers to God, and without God in the world, wholly overspread with Idolatrie, as we see Rom. 1. But in due time this Wildernesse was made the Garden of the Lord.

God the great husbandman of his Orchard the Church, began to plant the vast, wast grounds, the wildernesse of the Idolatrous Nations, the Gentiles, above sixteen hundred yeares agoe, and is still about it, and will at length finish it, and performe all his purpose, and pleasures towards them.

The time when he began this great plantation was in our Saviours daies, who gave light to the Gentiles that sate in darknesse; but especially after his Resurrection, and Ascension, he set his husbandmen (the Apostles and Disciples) on worke, Matth. 28. 19. Go teach all Nations, and Mark. 13. 10. the Gospell must be published among all Nations.

The Lord told Ananias, that Paul was a chosen Vessell unto him to beare his name before the Gentiles, Act. 9. 15. And Paul himselfe afterwards gloried in this, in that he was employed about this worke of being instrumentall in this great plantation (which now God was about, having newly begun it) of implanting or ingrafting the

Gentiles into Christ, the true Vine, and Olive tree: In as much as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, I magnifie mine office, Rom. 11. 13. He rejoyced greatly to foresee by faith, such a huge and vast Orchard (consisting of many millions of goodly fruit-trees that were to be planted in it) which would bring forth abundance of good fruits to the husbandman) so did Peter also (and many with him) rejoyce at it, Acts 10. 45. They were astonish'd, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. and Acts 11. 18. They glorified God saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

They saw this wonderfull great plantation begun, and cut out of the *Wast, and barren Wildernesse of the Gentiles*, and they rejoyced in it, and helped to carry it on: *Paul planted a large peece of ground, and God watered it, and gave the increase: for he tells us, Rom. 15. 19. from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum he fully preached the Gospell of Christ: he (through the power of the Word and Spirit) made wild trees, barren, unfruitfull trees, to be engrafted, fruitfull trees: The Gospell (containing the unsearchable riches of Christ) which he preached among the Gentiles, became an ingrafted word in their hearts, and sprang and grew up, and brought forth fruit as he tells us Col. 1. 6. The Gospell which is come unto you, as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruits, as it doth also in you since the day ye heard of it.*

Now here were great and glorious beginnings, and proceedings for many yeares together, in the *Apostles and Primitive times*, but afterwards the, worke went on more slowly, when *Antichrist* was revealed he that did let, being taken out of the way (that is the *Emperour* who had his seate in *Rome*, being removed to *Germany*) when the *Pope*, and the whole *Hierarchy of Rome* had gotten head and strength, and credit in the world, then they greatly hindred the worke, though it hath beene carried on ever since, yet much more slowly than at the beginning: After a time there arose many, and great enemies against the *Church*, and every where persecuted the *Saints*: The *Beast out of the bottomlesse Pit*, the *red Dragon*, the *Beast with seven heads and ten hornes*. The *Beast with two hornes like the Lamb*; the *Whore of Babylon*, the *Beast with the false Prophet*, &c. these enemies of the *Church* hindred (as much as in them lay) the propagation of the *Gospell*. As
formerly

formerly enemies hindred the building of the *Materiall Temple*, so have they ever since hindred the building of the *spirituall Temple*: or (according to the *Similitude*) the great *Plantation of the husbandman*. It is a very great Orchard, there is much work to be done in it, and about it, and many, and powerfull enemies are against it, therefore the husbandman is long about it: It is so large, that it reacheth to the ends of the earth: over every kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation, Rev. 5. 9. And as it is large, so there is much worke, and but little help; Matth. 9. 37. The harvest truly is great, and the Laborers but few.

There is herein a ground of exceeding great gladnesse and joycing, seeing that God (the great and skilfull husbandman) hath undertaken this worke, of Planting so large an Orchard, or Garden for himselfe, over all Nations; though there have beene but slow proceedings in the worke, for a long time, yet the proceedings have beene sure: God, & his people have been at worke ever since, they began it unto this day; and we have *Prophecies, & Promises* that it shall go on unto perfection, yea, and more speedily too, in these latter daies, than in former times, *Esay* 60. 3, 4, 5, &c. Lift up thine eyes round about and see, all they gather themselves together, they come to thee, the abundance of the sea (or Nations) shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the gentiles shall come to thee. They shall flie as doves to their windowes vers. 8.

1 Use.

Yea here is a ground of rejoicing indeede, when we consider the exceeding largnesse of this Orchard, which shall take in, not only the *Wildernesse of the Gentiles*, but also, his old, decayed forsaken Orchard, the Nation of the Jewes, the husbandman will joyne them to it, and Graffe them (these decayed, broken, withered Branches) in againe, and their comming in shall be as life from the dead, Rom. 11. 15. it shall be a mighty advantage to the whole Church in all parts: here will be a wonderfull, beautifull, large Orchard, let us cast our eyes above, as well as below, and looke upon that part now already transplanted into heaven, as well as that upon Earth, and withall consider it with its increase, that it is daily growing larger and larger, Zach. 2. 11. Many Nations shall be joyned to the Lord in that day, what day? even when the Lord shall inherit Judah, his portion, in the holy Land, and shall chuse Jerusalem againe. Here is a Prophecy of the comming in both of the Jewes and Gentiles about

about one time, which will greatly enlarge the Church, and is a ground of great rejoycing to all the people of God.

2 Use.

Seeing God is a long time in calling of the Gentiles, this should stirre up the people of God in this Nation, and other Nations (who are called) unto continuall praises unto him, for that he hath done the worke already for us: many other parts of the world are yet in darknesse, they are yet as the wildernesse, wild trees, and unmanured, not yet within the compasse of this pleasant Orchard, we might have bene in their case.

3 Use.

Thirdly: Seeing the worke is great, and God hath bene a long time about it, and is yet going on, let all that can, helpe forward the worke, God is able to do all works which he wills by his owne immediate hand, but he is pleased to use Instruments therein: The great husbandman, hath subhusbandmen, underworkmen in his great Plantation, All his people are required to put to their hand for the enlargement of the kingdome of Christ, by their Prayers, exhortations, represses, instructions, admonitions, Examples, &c. according to the gifts, & Talents they have received. Especially now in this generation seeing God by his providentiall dispensations calls aloud for it, having given his people (2) freedome and liberty in all places, and great encouragements in the worke of the Lord, which in former ages they have not had: It is the duty not only of Pastors, and Officers of particular congregations, but of all believers to labour to enlarge the kingdome of Iesus Christ, and to be faithfull, diligent laborers in the Lords Vineyard. This is the Lords great designe, and the very worke of this generation, in a particular respect, who so hinders, or neglects it (even of Gods owne people) shall suffer for it; who so faithfully acts in it, shall meete with speciall manifestations of the Love of God towards them.

But this is no liberty for any people, under the pretence of new revelations from God, and a light within to go about teaching things contrary to his word, and revealed will, and to condemne all Churches, and Congregations, persons & things, though never so holy, that are not of their way, and cast into their mould.

The

The ninetie fourth Observation in Nature.

THe husbandman does not much stand upon the outward forme of his Orchards, and Gardens, to have them all just of one fashion, and shape, either round, or long, or square, or otherwise: He having divers Orchards, and gardens, they are some of one forme, and some of another, as some are larger than others, so some are of one cut, or shape, and some of another, he accompts it not necessary that they be all Uniforme; but so the inward forme be good, so the trees have good Natures, and properties, bringing forth good fruits, thats it he values, its all in all.

This shadowes out unto us this Proposition: That

Externall Uniformity in the Churches of Christ, is of small accompt *Proposition shadowed.*
with him, in respect of Unity and spirituall worship.

Severall congregations, or Churches of Christ (having the spirit of Christ, faith, love, unity of doctrine, and ordinances) may have divers formes, and waies of outward administrations, and every Church is to be left to its owne liberty therein, and not to be injoynd such or such Formes, Methods, and waies of proceedings, in the worship of God, or in the discipline and goverment of the particular Churches.

For now in the time of the New Testament, the worship of God consisteth not in Externals (neither are they commanded) as heretofore under the old administrations of the law: But our Saviour tels us, John 4. 23. *The houre commeth and now is, when the true worshippers, shall worship the father in spirit, and in truth.* Many in the Apostles time had vaine, and needlesse disputations, about meat and drink, and observation of daies, and such like, Rom. 14. 1, 3, 5, 10, 13, &c. he tels them, vers. 17. *The Kingdome of God is not meat, and drinke (it consisteth not in any externall thing) but it is righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Ghost.*

So that he leaves them to the using, or not using of such outward things to their owne pleasures, being of an indifferent Nature: vers. 5. *let every man be fully perswaded in his owne mind.*

Now

b As for one day in seven to be dedicated to God in worship, that is the morall part of the fourth commandment and was changed from the seventh to the first day of the weeke, by Christ himselfe, and observed by his Apostles and Disciples.

Now so it is, in respect of *Externall Uniformity* in Churches, the worship of God being *New spirituall*, he leaves the *externall part of it* unto the choice and pleasure of his people, to concur in *one way* or *Externall forme*; or to *vary*, as they judg meete, and convenient (every particular Church among themselves) in respect of *time, place, manner and forme*, and would not have his people to fall out, and differ about tything *Mynt, Anise, Cummin*, (petty and indifferent things) while they neglect the *weighty, and great matters of the Law, unity, and spirituall worship*.

The *Apostle Paul* sharply reproves the *Corinthians* for standing so much upon *Mens, Names, Titles*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 12. *One saies, I am of Paul, another, I am of Apollo, another of Cephas, another of Christ*, even as many in our daies they stick in the outside, in *Names, and Formes, Lutherans, Calvinists*, some are for the *Episcopall way*, some for the *Presbyterian*, some for the *Independent*, some for the *Rebaptis*

b These people proceede further in censuring others then ever any did; for they judge and condemne not only the *Formes, & outward administrations* of all Churches: but also the whole *spirituall state, & condition* of all persons that are not of their way, and that suddenly, and rashly, without knowledge of the persons; contrary both to *Scripture and Reason*: crying up a dimme *Naturall light* within, and neglecting the true light of the word and spirit of God: who not trying the spirits, whether they be of God or not, they (in many things) put darknesse for light and light for darknesse.

2d way, some reject all these (as the *b Quakers*) & say their's is the true way: So that may we not say as the *Apostle* said 1 *Cor.* 3. 3. *Are ye not carnall? for whereas there is among you envying, and strife and divisions, are ye not carnall and walke as men?* In as much as they differ about *Names, and Formes*, and neglect, and breake love, and unity, they are herein, *carnall*, though there may be truth of grace in, and among them, yet in this thing they are weake, they are carnall: this is knowing and approving of men, after the flesh which the *Apostle Paul* allowes not, 2 *Cor.* 5. 16.

I suppose it may be said of this, or that *Forme of worship* as *Paul* saies of *Circumcision*, 1 *Cor.* 7. 19. *Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the Commandments of God*, and *Gal.* 6. 15. *In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a New creature*, neither this or that *forme, or externall way of worship* availeth any thing but *faith, love, & spirituall worship: righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Ghost: an interest in Christ, regeneration, or becoming a new Creature, unity and love with,*

with, and towards one another, walking with God, in fellowship with the father, and with his sonne Jesus Christ in spirituall worship: these are the things that God requires of his people. Not but that God calls for the service, and worship of the outward man, and some Externall formes, and maies in his spirituall worship, as well as inward worship: but he ties not his people to one way, or forme, as men would do, and stand for, and make divisions among the Churches about it: which God no where requires in his word; and as for Examples in the Apostles times, they vary in every Church, as occasions required: ther's no one forme (only) established.

As for that Command, 1 Cor 14.40. *Let all things be done decently and in Order*, the meaning is not that the worship of God in his Ordinances, or practises in all Churches should be all in one manner, way, or forme, but that they should observe Order among themselves, in every particular Church, or congregation: As in Cities and Townes Corporate, though their Customes differ one from another, yet there is Order in, and among themselves, in each particular place.

The Apostle tels us, Acts 10.34,35. *That in every Nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him*: Now in many, or severall Nations, there are many and severall waies and formes, in and about the worship of God, in the administrations of the Ordinances of Christ, & yet all are accepted of God, when the worship is in spirit, and in truth.

Bodily exercise profiteth little: 1 Tim. 4.8. any thing whatsoever wherein the body is exercised is of little, or small accompt, in respect of spirituall worship: it is the acting of the spirit, soule exercise, that God looks after and stands upon; he values but little bodily exercise, any thing whatsoever that is externall, in his worship.

Now the reason why God stands not upon externals in his worship (or the same customes, and orders among all the Saints) is because he is a spirit, and spirituall worship is suitable unto him: let it be clothed with this or that forme, it is accepted if it be in sincerity and truth: Secondly, because Christ hath set his people free from the yokes of bondage, Gal. 5.1. Not only from Circumcision, and legall Ceremonies and formes, but also from all other Rules and precepts of men, which his word hath not laid downe.

It is true indeede: in *time of the Law* for 2000 yeares together, the Church was under formes, and set *prescript Rules* for the *externall part of worship*, but when *Christ* came he set his people free, not only from *sin* (as before his comming in the flesh) but also from all those *Methods, and Formes, Rites, and Ceremonies*, commanded by *Moses* from the mouth of God, *Ephe. 2. 15.* He *abolished the Law of Commandments, contained in Ordinances*, that is, the old *externall administrations about the worship of God*, that so all his people, as well *Gentiles* (now) as *Jewes*, might worship God in *spirit and in truth*, but no more in this, or that *externall forme*, and no other: And accordingly the Church of *Christ* hath beene at liberty in respect of *formes*, in the *Apostles, and primitive times*, and for many ages together afterwards, untill of latter times *externall Uniformitie* was earnestly pressed in the Churches, which *Luther* and other Good men opposed.

The *Essence of the Kingdome of God* is not any *externall thing* but *righteousnesse, peace, and joy in the holy Ghost, faith, love, holinesse, walking with God: in these things.*

I Use.

From what hath beene said we may conclude; That to stand for *Uniformity, or onenesse* in the *externall part of the worship of God in the Ordinances, or Government of Churches*, and for want thereof to breake off *unity, love, and Communion* with the people of God, it is of the *flesh*, and not of the *spirit*: This hath beene, and is the great sin and mistake, even of many of the people of God, the ground of whose differences lies in such *externall things, circumstances, and formes*, as the word hath not determined, or prescribed to be either so, or so; though men would be thought to prove their opinions (in particular thiogs) as to the *forme of worship and Church Government*, by the Scriptures.

The *Godly* of the *Episcopall, and Presbyterian Judgment*, the *Independent, and Rebaptized Churches*, and others differing from them, what do they differ about? Not the *Essentials of Religion, or worship*, but meerely in *Ceremonies, formes, and Externall things*, which are not clearely held forth neither in the *Doctrine of the Gospell*, nor in any constant practise of the *Saints*. For we cannot find in all the *Acts of the Apostles, or primitive Christians*, any constant *Methods and Formes* in the *worship of God, or in Government of Churches*, but they varied in the *formes, and externall Acts*, as occasion was offered.

Paul

Paul preached sometimes on the *Jewes Sabbath*, sometimes on the *first day*; yea (as occasion was) *every day*; and sometimes in the *night*; sometimes he prayed and taught in the *house*, sometimes in a *ship*, sometimes by a *River side*, sometimes in a *Temple*: To the *Jewes* he became as a *Jew*, to the *Greeks* as a *Greece*, to the *strong* as *strong*, to the *weake*, as *weake*, he became *all things* to *all*, that he might winne *some*: he stood not upon *externall formes* in *worship*, but upon the *substance*, and *Essence* of it, which is *spirituall*.

Our *Saviour Christ* sometimes he prayed long (*all night*) sometimes he was *breife*, sometimes he stood, and lift up his eyes to *heaven*, sometimes being *prostrate* on the *ground*: sometimes he taught in the *Temple*, sometimes in a *private house*, sometimes in a *ship*, sometimes on the *shore*, sometimes *standing*, sometimes *sitting*: The *disciples* of *John* they fasted often, but *Christs Disciples* tooke more *liberty* in the use of the *Creatures*; *Christ* administered the *Sacrament* of the *supper* in the *evening*, *Paul* at *midnight*, some in the *Morning*, others at *noone*; some *Churches* receive it *sitting*, others *kneeling*, some take the *Elements* from the *Ministers hand*, others sit about the *table*, and take the *bread* and *wine* themselves: some partake of this *Ordinance* every *weeke*, others every *moneth*, some twice in a *moneth*, others twice in the *yeare*, or as oft as they please.

And as there is a *liberty* in the *Churches* to *vary* (and no *Uniformity*) in these *Ordinances*, so also the *Customes* have beene *various* in respect of *Baptisme*; some *Churches* Baptize with dipping, others by *sprinkling*; some *Churches* Baptize *Infants* of believing *Parents*; others, only those persons who can give an account of their *faith*, and hence now ariseth the great *controversie*, and contention amongst *brethren*, who fall out by the way, and break *peace*, *love*, and *Communion* one with another about the *shadow*, the *figre*, the *forme*, though both have and hold the *substance*: Many *Members* of both *Churches* are Baptized with the *holy Ghost* and with *fire*, as *John 1. 5.* are baptized into one body by the *spirit*, *1 Cor. 12. 13.* yea, and have beene baptized with *water* also, though there be not a *Uniformity* in their practise: perhaps the difference will prove (when thoroughly understood) but a *circumstantiall* difference and doubtlesse no sufficient ground to breake off *Communion* amongst the *Members* of *Christ*.

Surely *Iesus Christ* will not take it well at their hands, who refuse *Communion and fellowship* with those with whom he himselfe delights to have *Communion*, and who are ashamed to call them *brethren*, whom *Christ* himselfe is not ashamed to call *brethren*, *Heb. 2. 11*. All believers are brethren, not by a conformity (or Uniformity) in any Ceremony or externall obseruation, but by faith in *Christ*.

All have the priuiledge to be the *sonnes and daughters of God* who believe on his name, *John 1. 12*. all are the *Children of God* by faith in *Christ Iesus*, *John 3. 26*.

Now therefore: for men to refuse, or neglect *Communion and fellowship* with their fellow *Members*, and brethren, for want of *Uniformity* in a Ceremony, in the signe, though they have the substance, is it not carnall, do not such walke as men?

2 Use.

Let us maintaine *unity, love, and fellowship* with all the *Godly*, though they differ from us in *iudgment* or practise in the way and manner of administrations in the worship of *God*, or particular practises in Government: for the ground of the Churches *Unity* is not *Uniformity* in any externall things, but it is their having all but one head.

The *Apostle* most earnestly beseecheth them to maintaine *Unity* upon a sevenfold ground, but in them all not a word of *Uniformity*, *Ephes. 4. 4*. There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all: Here we see, 1. All believers, though multitudes of Members yet are but one body. 2. That one body, hath but one spirit, As one soule animates and sets on worke all the Members of the Naturall body, so does this one spirit in the mysticall body. 3. There is also one hope: All believers have an expectation of the enjoyment of *God* in glory for ever. 4. They have all one Lord: are fellow servants under one Lord *Iesus Christ*. 5. So also have they but one faith, believers in all ages of the world have but one faith, in the same *God* and Saviour. 6. They have but one Baptisme, not baptism of the signe, but of the substance; all believers are baptized with the baptism of the spirit, Jewes, and Gentiles in all ages; *1 Cor. 12. 13*. By one spirit we are all baptised into one body, whether we be Jewes or Greeks. 7. Believers have but one *God* and Father, they are all borne of *God*, are brethren in the Lord, sonnes and daughters alike to the Lord Almighty, Heires together of one Inheritance and Kingdome.

So

So then, Here are *strong bonds of Unity, and love*, among the Saints, though *Uniformity in outward things*, be wanting (heres no mention at all of *Uniformity*) though they differ in their opinions, in *maies and formes of worship*, and *Government*, yet being all one body, having all one *spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptisme, one God and Father*, these are sufficient grounds of their *Union, and love*, one with, and to another: These are the things that God stands upon, having *Unity here in these things* whereby they worship him *in spirit and truth*, though they vary in many *externall parts of worship, and outward administrations*, they are dispensed withall as we see, *Rom. 14. 18. he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men*, and *vers. 3. God hath received him, or approved of him.*

Let not men therefore disowne their brethren, for differing from them in the *forme, in outward administrations of worship or Government*: when yet they worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth: which if they doe, it is from the *carnall part*, and to be mortified.

The ninetie fifth Observation in Nature.

THe Husbandman often makes a *hedg, or fence*, about his Orchard, and Garden, with *wild plants, unfraittfull trees*, or such as beare *naughty, unpleasant fruits*: as *Crabtreees, Thornes, Bryers, Okes, Albes, Elmes*, or any such like. Which serve well for a *mound, or fence*, about his *fruitfull Trees*, and preserve them from *anoyances*, and *hurts*, that else they are *subject unto by Cattle*, and otherwise in many respects.

This shadowes out unto us: That

God (*many times*) makes use of *wicked, and unregenerate persons* for *Proposition* the preservation and good of his owne Children. shadowed.

Many *Kings*, and *Magistrates* though *wicked, and carnall*, have beene set up for the defence of the Godly: very many *carnall persons* though they have but only *generall convictions*, a *forme of Godlinesse, common Gifts, and graces*, yet they owne the true Religion, and the professors of it: notwithstanding they have

no true, nor cordiall love to either: God makes such as an outward *common fence* against the breakings in of *Tyrannicall*, and *savage persons*, who might otherwise annoy the Church of God. Yea, many *Morall persons* are not only a meanes of defence to the Godly, but they are also *helpers*, many waies, by their *Gifts*, and *Talents*, and outward *good things* which God hath given them.

The spirit of God doth convince the world of *unregenerate persons* upon this Accompt, even for the good of his owne people, giving to them some *common light*, and *graces*, and apprehensions of the things of God, that so he may take off their fiercenesse, and bitterness that otherwise would naturally break out against the Godly; and not only so, but that also they may be helpfull, and profitable to his owne people.

Pharaoh was convinced that God was with *Ioseph*, and so became his freind; yea, and to all his brethren, and his fathers house; and preserved them, and nourished them with the best things of the Land of Egypt, *Gen. 40.* *Laban* entertained, and preserved *Iacob* above 20 yeares together, *Gen. 29. &c.* *Pharaohs* daughter nourished *Moses*, & the whole Court was his freind many yeares. *King Nebuchadnezzar*, was convinced that God was with *Daniel*, & preserved, and promoted *Daniel*; so did *Belshazzar* And *King Darius* afterwards: *Dan. 6. 3.* *Shadrach*, *Mesbach*, and *Abednego* were not only preserved, but advanced in the Province of *Babylon* by *King Nabuchadnezzar* a heathen king.

There is abundant Experience of this truth, in all ages, especially in these times of the Gospell; multitudes having *common convictions* of the things of God, and entertaining the *forme* of *Godliness*, though they want the power. They generally (if they have power) preserve the people of God, and Religion, from *overthrowes*, and *destructions*, which otherwise *Tyrants*, and *barbarous enemies* would bring upon them: Yea, and God makes them many waies *usefull*, and *helpfull* to his people, by their *Gifts*, and *Common graces*, in *Naturall*, and *Morall things*.

Use.

This discovers the *speciall care*, and *love* of God, the *power*, *wisdom*, & *goodnesse* of God towards his owne people; who maketh even their *enemies* to become *freinds* to them: *Enemies* indeed, in their *Principles*, & *Natures*, but *freinds* through the overruling power of God: The *World*, & all the *creatures* in it, are ruled, & ordered for the good of the

the people of God: *All things are yours* (saith the Apostle) *Co. 3. 21. 22. the world, life, death, things present, & things to come, all are yours. God useth, overruleth and ordereth all things, for the advantage of them that feare him.*

The ninetie sixth Observation in Nature.

THe Husbandman in Ordering of his fruit-trees observes the seasons: some works are to be done at such a time of the yeare: The spring is the season for Grafting, the sommer for Inoculating, Autumne, and winter for Transplanting, pruning and other workes. he carefully observes the seasons for particular works.

This shadowes out unto us this Proposition: That

God in his infinite wisdom, and goodnesse observes the fittest times in all his dispensations towards his people. Proposition shadowed.

The great husbandman of his Vineyard, and Garden enclosed, as he gives discretion to men to order their works of husbandry, doth with infinite more wisdom, order his owne husbandry in respect of the matter, manner, and seasons of his worke: When he correcteth his people, as he does it in measure so also in season; when it is most likely to prevaile, and take effect, and when his spirit reproves the soule, it is alwaies in season. Esay 28. 26.
Jer. 30. 11.

When he speakes to comfort, and refresh the soule, it is in season, *Esay 50. 4. That I should know how to speake a word in season to him that is weary: he gives his Cordials seasonably. He is a God of Iudgment and Wisdom, and he waits to be gracious, Esay 30. 18. He tarries the time, stayes till the fittest time, waites for the opportunity, the season to give in a mercy: when it may be with most advantage to his owne glory, and the good of his people.*

As God staies till the fittest time for the punishment of wicked men (when he may do it most to the glory of his Justice) so also in the dispensations of grace and mercy to his people. God taries till men have filled up the measure of their sin: *Gen. 15. 16. The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. And God indures with much long suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, Rom. 9. 22. so also he waits till his people be fitted for such, or such a mercy as he intends to give, till some corruption be more mortified and subdued, and till grace have attained more strength, till grace have*

have beene tryed; and thereby beene improved, and increased: when the soule is *prepared*, and the *season* come, then also the mercy will come: *Hab. 2. 3. it will surely come it will not tarry: Israels deliverance out of Egypt* (as a type of other mercies and deliverances to the Church, and people of God in after ages) it was at an *appointed time*, and *fittest time*, when the people were best prepared for such a dispensation, *Exod. 12. 41. the selfe same day it came to passe*. So also God dealeth with others of his people, according to that of the Prophet, *Psalms. 102. 13. Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Syon; for the time to favour her, yea the set time is come*.

God observes the *fittest time*, the *season*, in his dispensations towards his people, that thereby he may lay a ground for the advantage of his owne glory; for the clearer manifestation of his glorious *Attributes, Mercy, Justice, wisdom, power, goodnesse, &c.* And secondly, because hereby wee are the more clearly convinced of what is done, and are more taken, more affected with it, it makes the deeper impression, is set on the more strongly, and a mercy *in season* engages the heart more firmly, and fully, than otherwise it would do: Peter was not delivered out of Prison at first, so soone as the Church prayed for him, but God chose a *peculiar season*, even the very night before Herod intended to bring him forth to execution, *Acts 12.* God made *Hanna* to wait long for a mercy, yea God himselfe waited to be gracious to her, at the *fittest time*, when she was in extraordinary bitterness of spirit, God gave her her hearts desire; a Child of many Prayers, and so of many mercies.

1 Use.

Hence we should learne to magnify the riches of the *wisdom*, and *grace of God* towards us, who not only bestowes good things upon us but his care is also to give them in the *fittest time*.

2 Use.

Doth God waite on us to dispense mercies, for our best advantage, and shall not we waite on God, shall not we be content to tarry the *Lords leisure*, which is alwaies the *fittest time*, for the fulfilling of his *promises*, and our *prayers*, as the Prophet encourageth us: *Psalms. 27. 14. Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait I say on the Lord*.

3 Use.

Is God *seasonable* in all his dispensations towards us, let us then labour to be *seasonable* in bringing forth fruit unto him, and one towards another: It is true, we should beare good fruits continually;

nually. but yet there are some *especiall times*, some *seasons*, *opportunities* which are *advantages* in our *actings* for God, our selves, and others; these a Christian should *watch* for, and *wisely manage*.

The ninetie seventh Observation in Nature.

THe Roote of a tree communicates, and gives up sap to all the Branches, one as well as another, to the *smalest* as well as to the *greatest*: the *least branch*, or *Twig upon the Tree*, yea the *least bud upon the least branch*, hath as *constant*, and *reall* a supply of sap from the *roote*, as the *greatest bough or branch upon the Tree*.

This shadowes out unto us: That

Jesus Christ gives forth as *constant* a supply of all grace to the *meanest* of his people, as to those who are *most eminent*. *Proposition shadowed.*

Christ takes care of all his people, he will not loose or neglect the *least member*: John 17. 12. *Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost.* He praies for them all, John 17. 21. *That they all may be one, as thou father art in me and I in thee &c.*

He provides *milke* for *babes*, as well as *strong meate* for such as are *better growne*, 1 Cor. 3. 2. And chargeth Peter againe and againe, (as he would shew his love to him) to feede his *Lambs* and his *Sheepe*, John 21. 15, 16, 17. He gives a charge to all that they take heed that they offend not, nor despise one of his *little ones*, Matth. 18. 10. He is the good and carefull *Shepherd*, that takes care of all his *sheep*, and feeds them, John 10. He carries the *Lambs* in his *bosome*, and gently leaderh such as are *young*, Esay 40. 11. *not one of his little ones shall perishe*, Matth. 18. 14. And as he writes unto the *elder* and *stronger Christians*, the *fathers*, and *young men*: so also to his *little Children*, 1 John 2. 12, 13. &c. He takes care of all, and communicates grace, and supplies to all, to the *meanest*, and *weakest*, as well as the *strongest*: Yea, and rewards all that shew good will, (though the *smalest kindnesse*) to the *least* of his *Members*, as if they had donne it to himselfe, Matth. 25. 40. *Verily I say unto you,*

in as much as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, yee have done it unto me.

1 Use.

This magnifies the riches, of the free grace and love of Jesus Christ towards his people: who though he be exalted on high, and set at the right hand of God, farre above all Principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in the world to come, Ephe. 1. 21. yet he remembers his people, even every one of them: as well the least and meanest, as the strongest and most eminent of them: as well the Lambs, little Children, and babes, as strong men, and fathers; and communicates of his fulnesse, grace for grace, as well to one, as to another (in their measure) as really as the Roote does sap to all the branches, small and great.

2 Use.

This is a ground of strong and lasting consolation to all weak believers who are still under doubts, and feares by reason of their weaknesse: let such know, and consider, that Christ upholds them, though they are but small, and weak twigs, or branches, being united to the stock, or Roote, the same nourishes them, and gives up (by his spirit) sure, and constant supplies of sap, and life unto them, whereby they live and grow and beare fruit (some more some lesse) as really as the greatest branches: His love is to one, as well as to another, all were purchased at one, and the same rate even with his owne blood.

The ninetie eighth Observation in Nature.

Some Fruit-trees are profitable for one purpose, and some for another, their fruits being of severall kinds, some are usefull one way, and some another, some are fittest for Cider, others to bake, or to be prepared severall waies for the Table, others are eaten of themselves, without any preparation; some are fit for foode, some for Physick, some for Cordials: all are good, and profitable in their kinds, according to their severall uses.

Proposition
shadowed.

This shadowes out unto us this Proposition: That

The people of God bring glory to him, profit, and edification to the body of Christ, in divers respects, according to the diversity of the Gifts,
Graces

Graces, and Operations of the spirit of God in them.

This is manifest from *Scripture*, and continuall *Experience*. Believers having severall *Gifts* and *endowments* in *Nature*, and *grace*, are imployed, and set on worke by God in their generations according as he hath fitted them for their severall works: For as the Members in the *Naturall* body have not all one, and the same Office, so neither the *Mysticall* body, *Rom.* 12. 5. Having then *Gifts*, differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether *prophecie*, let us *prophecie* according to the proportion of faith *vers.* 7. Or *Ministry*, let us wait on our *Ministring*, or he that teacheth, on teaching, or he that exhorteth on exhortation &c. As every man hath received the gift, so Minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; Let him do it as of the ability which God giveth, that God in all may things be glorified through *Jesus Christ*, *1 Pet.* 4. 10, 11. What ever his gifts, or abilities be, weak or strong, meane or eminent, they are his *Talents* (or one at least) which must not be hid, but used, and imployed, for the glory of God, and profit of himselfe and others.

As among the *Members* of the body, the least, and meanest is use, full, and profitable to the body; And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no neede of thee: nor againe the head to the feete, I have no need of you: but such as seeme to be most feeble, are necessary, *1 Cor.* 12. 21, 22. so in the body of *Christ* and also in the *politick* body, the *Common-wealth*, the laboring husbandman, and the meanest *Tradesman* are necessary, and their labours, and industries, in severall and various waies, are all, as (really in their measure) conducing to the upholding, and advantaging of a Nation, as those in the highest imployments.

The *Apostle* shewes this truth very largely, *1 Cor.* 12. 4, 5, 6. &c. There are diversities of *Gifts*, diversities of administrations, diversities of operations by the same spirit, *vers.* 8. To one is given the Word of wisdom, to another the Word of Knowledge, to another faith, to another the gifts of Healing, to another the working of Miracles, to another Prophecie, to another discerning of spirits, to another divers Tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these worketh that one and the selfe same spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

Seldome, or never is it seene that any one man is *eminent* in all the *faculties of the mind*, in all *gifts and graces*, but if he excell in one, he is *defective* in another. If his gift lie in *solidity of Iudgment*, and *understanding*, it may be he is *defective* in his *utterance*, or *ready making out*, what he conceives, and apprehends, wherein some others excell, that come short of him in *Iudgment*: one man excells in *quicknesse of apprehensions*, another in *soundnesse of Iudgment*, another in the *gift of memory*, another in a *facile, and ready expressi-on*. One is eminent in the *grace of faith*, another in *love*, another in *humility*, another in *patience*, another in *zeale*: One man hath skill in one *science*, another man in another; One in this *Art*, or *Trade*, another in some other.

As the *Members in the Naturall body* have severall formes, and severall *uses and offices*, so is it in the *Mysticall body the Church*, and also in the *state, or Common wealib*, that in various, and severall respects, all might bring *Glory to God* and benefits one to another.

1 Use.

The consideration of this should make us to admire the wonderfull *wisdome of God*, in so ordering, and disposing of things, that one person might be helpfull and profitable to another: every one usefull in his place, and calling, by their severall *gifts, graces, attings and operations*, of *severall natures and degrees*, among themselves, and one with another, that all should conduce, and worke together (though in severall waies, and respects) to bring glory to God, and profit, and edification each to other.

2 Use.

This also should teach *Governours* (and all who have any charge over others) to observe, and find out, what the *Gift*, and *qualification* is, of those over whom they have any charge, that so accordingly they may *designe* them, and *dispose* of them; this is their duty, and their *wisdome*. And it is every ones duty in reference to himselfe (before he enter upon any *Calling*, or course of life) to consider wherein chiefly his gift lies, that accordingly he may apply himselfe: For seeing the spirit of God divides to every man *gifts and qualifications severally as he will*, 1 Cor. 12. 11. it is our duty to row with the streame, and saile with the wind; we shall make the speedier and better progresse. And for want of this many men dishonour themselves & their *Callings*, & God most of all, by entring upon those waies, and works for which they are no way fit, as wanting

ting a Gift to that purpose, it lying in some other respect, which they ought to have searched out and improved, that so they might have brought thereby more glory to God, and more profit to the body of Christ.

And further in this Proposition as in a glasse, we may see the folly, and pride of some men, who being eminent in some Gifts, or endowments; and thereby also (it may be) answerably profitable, in Church or Commonwealth, upon occasion of which they despise others, who are their inferiours in such gifts: but know O vaine man, that those others may excell thee in some other Gifts, and may bring glory to God, and benefit to the body of Christ as much another way by their fervent prayers, spirituall speeches, and conferences, holy and humble walking, diligent improvement of Gifts, Talents, advantages which God hath put into their hands: And therefore Christians should walke humbly, though never so eminent in qualifications, even upon this consideration as well as others, that though they excell their brethren in these, and these things, yet those their brethren may go beyond them in other gifts, and be profitable as much, or more than themselves another way, according to what God hath given them.

3 Use.

The ninetie ninth Observation in Nature.

All the winter long there is sap abiding in the tree, and continually rising (a) up from the Roote, to preserve the tree in life, against all annoyances, by the aire, extracting out the sap, or by dry, cold winds, frosts, mildewes, blasting or the like, that els would destroy the tree.

Of this see at large, 100, 101, &c.

This shadowes out unto us: That

There is a continuall secret supply of strength from Christ, to every believer, in time of desertion, and temptation, to preserve from total falling away.

The Lord hath foretold his people that through many tribulations, they must enter into the kingdome of God, and hereafter in heaven it shall be said of them these are they that came out of great tribulations: They must goe through many tryals, and temptations in this world, yea some of them go through fiery tryals, very

sharp,

Pf. 69. 2. Lam.

3. 54. Waters
flowed over
mine head: then
I said I am cut
off.

sharp, hot, terrible temptations, both in reference to the outward, and inward man, when not only all creatures seeme to be against them, but even God himselfe also; God sometimes hides his face, and answers not, yea seems as an enemy, and yet in all these deepe (a) waters, and floods that runne over them, they are preserved from drowning, their head is above water, yea, and a secret hand underneath upholds them from sinking; God bids all his redeemed ones take notice of this *Esay. 43. 2.* *fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine: when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee, when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, &c.*

David was in great distresse, when he said *I am forgotten as a dead man out of minde, I am like a broken vessell, Psal. 31. 12.* yet helpe was nearer then he was aware of, which he afterwards perceived, and acknowledged, *v. 22. I said in my hast, I am cut off, from before thine eyes, neverthelesse thou heardest the voice of my supplications.*

In the winter of desertion, and distresse of soule, when the sunne is clouded, yea, and gone a farre off too, as to the soules apprehension, when a poore creature can perceive no motions of the spirit, nor workings of any grace, when theres no buds nor blossoms, no leaves nor fruits, to be perceived upon the tree, no signe of life, no sunne shine, nor showers, no dewes, no refreshing, but contrariwise, Clouds and darknesse round about, cold boysterous winds, sharp, hard frosts, stormes of snow, and haile, all discouragements, deadnesse, hardnesse of heart, all kinds of temptations, from within, and without, yet even then there are secret supports, from and by the hand of Christ, he is there present, and oversees all, and manages all for the good of the poore soule, for otherwise the spirit would faile, it could not be able to beare up under the weight of these temptations.

I Use.
Psal. 69. 2.

The consideration of this may be a Cordiall, to poore distressed soules, when they sinke and stick fast in the deepe mire where there is no standing, when they are fallen into deepe waters where the floods runne over them. Let them know and consider, that the thoughts of God towards them are not as their thoughts: They sometimes say, or are ready to say, and think as the distressed Church did, *Esay 49. 14. The Lord hath forsaken me; and my Lord hath forgotten me.* But

But what are their thoughts of God (in the meane time) towards such poore discouraged soules, his thoughts are thoughts of love, even the most tender love; passing the love of the most tender Mothers towards their deare Children: *Esay 49. 13. Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the sonne of her womb. yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.* Though God withhold sometimes the evidence of his love from his people, yet his love changeth not, though he seeme to cast downe, and overthrow yet he doth secretly uphold.

Therefore let such of his people that walke in darknesse, and have no light, trust in the name of the Lord and stay themselves upon their God, *Esay 50. 10.* and in the use of all good meanes waite for deliverance, for as God giveth now a sure and secret support in, and under the affliction, so he will give (in his time) a full deliverance; that his people may praise him.

I Use.

The hundred Observation in Nature.

Fruit-trees give forth their fruits, as freely to the poore, as to the Rich, they naturally beare as much and as good fruit in the poore mans Garden, or Orchard as in the rich mans: They are (all one) as free, and liberall to the poore, as to the Rich, and greatest persons.

Hence we may learne: That

True Christians doe communicate of their good things, as freely to the poore as to the Rich.

There are Rules, and commands to use, and improve our Talents of all good things for the good of all, Poore and Rich: but especially to give out, and distribute to the Poore, and meaner sort: and more especially to those that are Godly, *Gal. 6. 10. Do good unto all, but especially to the household of faith, 1 Tim 6. 18 Be ready to distribute, Willing to communicate, He. 13. 16. To do good, & communicate for get not.*

This is a just Reproofe unto those who call themselves Christians (and it may be are so) and yet have little regard to the Poore, and meaner sort of persons who live amongst them, in any the good things they communicate: Many of the greater sort of persons (Professors and others) are free in their Gifts, and benefites one towards another, frequently inviting, and feasting one another, but few, or none of the Poore, or meaner ranke of Christians, are the better for all such expences; directly contrary to the Rule, and commands of our blessed Saviour (as though they had never heard of any such thing)

I Use.

thing) where he saies plainely: *Luk. 14.12. When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy rich neighbours, and freinds, least they bid thee againe, and a recompense be made thee, but call the poore, &c. and thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the iust.*

Though this place be not so to be taken, as though the rich might not be invited, yet it is much more strong for the poore; But how far are many Rich Professors from walking by this rule, or the Example of *Job (Chap. 31. 17. who tels us he eat not his Morsels alone; but the poore had part with him:* and this was a ground of comfort to him in his greatest trouble? What will such persons answere our blessed Lord at the last day, when he tels them, ye were ashamed of me in my poore Members, ye owned them not, yee invited and entertained one another freely, and frequently, but my poore brethren were not amongst you; although ye knew your Masters will in this thing, yet ye did it not, but walked contrary to it?

2 Use.

This is for the honour & comfort of those who communicate of their good things as well (or much rather) to the poore, and meanest Members of *Jesus Christ*, as to the Rich, And according to the Example of *Christ*, owne them for brethren: To these he will say, *come ye blessed Children of my father, inherit the kingdome; for in as much as ye shewed kindnesse to these my brethren, ye did it unto me, Mat. 24. 34.*

Thus have I (through the assistance of God) performed my promise, to make up what was formerly published, in 100 Observations in Nature, with Similitudes; together with their improvement to spirituall uses.

I have many more in my Nursery; but most are yet in the seede, or Bud, which when they are grown up, and enlarged (as these) into a Body, and Branches, I shall (if the Lord please) communicate them also: that others (if they will but receive them, & be content to have them planted in their owne Gardens) may partake of their Fruits; such Fruits as the Apostle speakes of *Gal. 5. and Col. 1. 6.* And it is my desire, and supplication to the great husbandman that he will engraft every truth into our hearts, and cause it to grow, and thrive (by the Sunshine, and Raine of heaven) and to bring forth much good fruit, unto himselfe: pleasant, & savory fruits, such as he loveth, and will eat of, that his soule may blesse us; yea, & whereof we our selves may also feede, not only here but to all Eternity.

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